ABSTRACT

Lori Richardson Garcia, UTILIZING COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGES TO EMPOWER ALL VOICES AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN AN INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

While many school leaders seek feedback from different constituent groups, few bring together students, teachers, and parents in decision-making conversations. The purpose of this participatory action research study was to better serve a culturally diverse international middle school population by increasing the equity of voice in decision-making. This study was conducted with a group of Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPRs) that included students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Over three iterative cycles, the CPR team planned, cofacilitated, and gathered data from Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) that brought members of each constituent group together to discuss a topic slated for reform, homework. The findings of this project support the conclusion that when conscious efforts are made to bring members of different constituent groups together for conversations in ways that honor wisdom and context, people better understand each other's perspectives and shifts in thinking occur. At the same time, ideas about themselves, others, and the school also shift, leading to changes in practices, philosophies, and policies about the topic as well as the inclusion of more voices in decision-making. These findings have implications for educational leaders interested in equitable and sustained reform. A new framework is presented that illustrates the ways in which leaders can bring constituents from different backgrounds and positions within the community together to have authentic conversations that result in learning from one another, co-construction of common goals, and co-facilitation of enacting those goals.

UTILIZING COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGES TO EMPOWER ALL VOICES AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN AN INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Lori Richardson Garcia

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UTILIZING COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGES TO EMPOWER ALL VOICES AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN AN INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their unending love and support. To my mom and the memory of my dad, thank you for instilling in me a belief that I can do anything and for supporting me in all of my journeys. To my incredible husband who took the leap to join me across the world and make a wonderful life together, thank you for being my cheerleader and making this crazy schedule of ours work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just as the Community Learning Exchanges that provided the framework for this project are strengthened by the wisdom of people and the power of place, I have been honored and strengthened by the wisdom of those who contributed to this project and the power of this place we call home.

First and foremost, I am incredibly grateful to the students, parents, teachers, and administrators who supported and participated in this project. Your open and honest sharing as well as your willingness to cross boundaries and learn in public were integral parts of the success of our work together. It also speaks volumes about our collective commitment to do what's best for this community, even when it requires difficult changes.

In particular, this project was exponentially enhanced by the insight and commitment of the CPR team. Known in this dissertation as Alex, Allison, Paula, Tracy, Sarah, and Steven, you all made this work better by bringing your authentic selves into our meetings, helping make sense of the data, and in the end, making a difference in our school.

Finally, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Matt Militello and Lynda Tredway, my ECU mentors and dissertation champions, for their guidance, wisdom, and support. Thank you for enacting your vision for this international doctoral program and for pushing us to act for equity. I am a better leader, colleague, and researcher because of you.

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Introduction

Irwin Blumer, a former school superintendent, said that the majority of "what passes for school reform is superficial and ultimately fails because the difficulty of the task – institutional change – is underestimated. Real change can only come as a result of the commitments of both the minds and hearts of the total school community – teachers, parents, students, administrators, and school boards. Reform should be based on careful identification of deeply and commonly held values. Change can only be achieved through people's acceptance of responsibility to further their goals through their words and actions" (as cited in Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 1). His assertion, that in order for change to be lasting and meet the needs of all constituents, those constituents must all be involved in both the discussion and action, is at the heart of this participatory action research (PAR) project.

Despite being rooted in systems that promote inequality, the goals of American (and many international) educational systems are intended to promote equity (Labaree, 2008). In order to achieve the goal of equity and be more inclusive, schools must change the processes by which they go about planning and implementing reform measures. An equitable process of reform involves collaborative leadership practices that engage a diverse group of voices in each stage of the change process.

In a world of connectedness where people can talk and share information with others around the globe in real time, the goals of education have changed, and the concepts of "21st-century skills" and "global competence" emerged. Therefore, we expect students in today's classrooms to display a myriad of skills from critical thinking to environmental literacy to

collaboration across networks to multicultural understanding (Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2016; Taylor, 2014).

Most school reform efforts, however, largely remain the same (Militello, Rallis & Goldring, 2009). Rather than collaborating across networks, thinking critically from all angles, and taking multiple cultural perspectives into account, these reform efforts most often support top-down processes and tend to rely on experts from the outside to tell the faculty how to manage their classrooms. Parents and students are typically left out of the planning or implementation of reform initiatives altogether, even though both research and intuition tell us that those closest to the experience may have the wisdom necessary for restructuring that experience (Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson, & Militello, 2016).

Conversely, studies on the impact of parental involvement in schools are numerous and consistent in their findings that student success is positively impacted by parental involvement (Bolivar & Crispeels, 2011; Ferguson, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In a review of 51 studies on parental involvement, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that schools that are successful in engaging families build collaborative relationships among constituents, respect and address cultural needs and differences, and share power and responsibility with constituents. Another study on the impact of student involvement in reform efforts found that authorizing student voices can help teachers see the world from their perspectives and empower students to participate actively in their education (Cook-Sather, 2002).

However, the studies have been conducted mostly in the United States or other Western countries, and it is unknown whether the strategies suggested translate to domestic and international schools in non-Western contexts. In addition, there is limited research on the impact of bringing all these constituents together to tackle school reform in international schools. Care

should be taken when generalizing findings as the results may differ by culture. For example, in mostly Asian cultures where there is a hierarchy of power based on age and family status, children and teenagers may not share their opinions freely when they differ from their parents or elders (Li, 2012).

This study explored the implications of collaborating with an eclectic and diverse group of constituents (teachers, parents, students, and administrators) in the school improvement reform process in the middle school division of an international school in Taiwan. Using Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) as the methodology for collaborating with this diverse set of constituents in the design and implementation of the process that directly affects them or their children, the study examined the extent to which we increased equitable voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process in order to better serve a culturally diverse student and family population.

Focus of Practice

I set out to establish a new process for reform efforts that is thoughtful, data-driven, and inclusive of multiple voices of the school community. We focused on discussing their diverse culturally-informed perspectives on issues slated for change at the school. The CLE methodology we used emphasizes the wisdom of local constituents as a foundational part of any change process (Guajardo et al., 2016).

Often in schools, problem areas are obvious to most people involved because they impact achievements and outputs. However, wanting to fix things as quickly as possible, school personnel too often jump straight to problem-solving and testing solutions rather than unpacking the problem and examining it from the viewpoints of all constituents (Militello et al., 2009). By skipping this important step, schools can incur unintended consequences. At issue here is another

piece of the change puzzle, when school personnel and student and parent populations are culturally different, it is particularly likely that they do not actually look deeply at the diverse perspectives. In this section, I explore the myriad of differences between and within home and school cultures as well as the dangers of implementing reform without the wisdom of multiple perspectives.

An outsider looking at the population of the school might assume that students are mostly Taiwanese. While this may be true on an ethnic level, the vast majority of students exist and thrive in multiple cultures as they move between the Western expectations of school culture and very different expectations in their home culture. Explored more in Chapter 3, these students exemplify the Third Culture Kids (TCKs)" and "Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs)" described by Pollack and Van Reken (1999). Two-thirds of students have lived and attended school only in Taiwan. However, a large portion of this group and/or their parents have also spent time abroad, in the US and/or in multiple other countries around the world. There are also several students with no familial ties to Taiwan who come from various countries around the globe and are often more transient. In addition, several parents were raised in different cultures than their spouses, and as children, a few attended international schools such as this one.

These varying perspectives and experiences inform and impact the familial expectations and experiences of school. The students and parents who experienced more traditional Taiwanese schools with lecture formats and corporal punishment for misbehavior may be surprised by the freedom students receive at this school. On the other hand, families more acquainted with an inquiry-based Montessori-type curriculum favored by some international and European schools may be surprised by the rigidity of the curriculum. Both types of previous

experiences lead to misunderstandings about the behavioral expectations within the classrooms of this school as well as the type of outside preparation that leads to success.

In contrast, the vast majority of faculty and administrators in the school are Western, primarily from the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Their behavioral and academic expectations of students are based on their preparation and training in Western universities. While many teachers understand that their students have attended very different schools prior to joining this one, they often do not fully understand the students or the implications of their previous experiences. When reform is called for, the programmatic responses to issues are based on the teachers' and administrators' own socio-cultural perspectives and knowledge base, which is often only slightly informed by knowledge or cultural expectations and may have unintended consequences. This happens in both individual classrooms when a teacher addresses an issue from her own perspective but also on a large scale with school-wide initiatives, which are usually implemented based on trends set by top independent schools in the US.

However, one asset of the school is that faculty and administrators often seek feedback. In addition to the formal climate survey and teacher ratings, administrators often seek informal feedback through focus groups of students, parents, or teachers. However, this information is usually one way and only involves one type of constituent at a time. Parents, teachers, and students rarely, if ever, talk or problem-solve with each other about programs and policies and their impact on each other.

In contrast, CLEs bring a diverse group of constituents together to discuss the multiple layers of an issue, build relational trust, and model democratic processes of reform. One major aim of this process is to allow more equity of voice in reform activities by encouraging those constituents least likely to share their perspectives to do so in a safe and non-threatening

environment so that they are heard and involved in the decisions that impact their lives. In addition, this process endeavors to create a more informed base of teachers, administrators, students, and parents who understand the complexity of a diverse population's needs.

Another aim of CLEs is to honor the power of place. Not only are the individuals involved in CLEs bringing their own identities and perspectives influenced by culture and experience, so too is this specific context unique and dynamic. As an international school with diverse constituents and a long, varied history, we have assets, challenges, and goals that may fundamentally differ from those of other schools who may be close either locally or ideologically. Through the CLEs, we are able to bring people together to discuss issues and experiences as they relate to this context, with the knowledge that in a different context those issues and experiences may manifest in vastly different ways.

Honoring both people and place, one of the named essential capacities for our students is "global perspective" which involves understanding both one's own perspective of the world and how it relates to the perspectives of others. By articulating perspectives and comparing and contrasting them with others from different cultural backgrounds, it stands to reason that each CLE participant may further enhance his or her metacognition of the cultural lens through which he or she sees the world. Because identity development is an important task of adolescence that is more complicated for CCKs, discussing their perspectives and their implications in and out of the classroom supports their growth and development as well as wards against the potential challenges associated with being a CCK such as rootlessness, unresolved grief, and confusion.

Evidence

The focus of practice evolved as I discussed it with multiple constituents. Explained more thoroughly in Chapter 3, prior to beginning the project, I conducted an initial research learning

exchange where I spoke with many faculty members, administrators, parents, and students about the topic of cultural identity and how it impacts the students at the school. I was initially interested in how cultural identity is formed in international school students who are experiencing multiple cultures. However, the conversations with constituents highlighted how the differences between an American education and a multicultural upbringing affect the success of the educational systems and initiatives we put in place. I realized that the way these differences play out may be a key player in some other issues we face, and therefore a better place to focus my energy.

Figure 1 illustrates the themes that emerged through my analysis of my focus of practice and my conversations with various constituents during the research learning exchange. I noted several factors that influence how well the school meets the needs of its diverse population as well as the equity of voice within and among constituent groups in the school. The variations in cultural backgrounds impact the experiences of and interactions among parents, students, and faculty within the school. In addition, the established practices for decision-making do not always take into account multiple perspectives in equitable ways.

After speaking with parents, students, faculty, and my principal, it became even more evident to me that cultural differences, particularly those between Eastern and Western cultures that exist within the school, are the external forces that impact this focus of practice on a macro level. On the intermediary (meso) level are interactions between the school and students and parents through parent familiarity with the school norms and faculty understanding of students and their familial backgrounds. Within the action space of this project, the micro level, there are several individuals from all constituent groups, who want to find ways to bridge these gaps and bring more perspectives into the decision-making process. By utilizing my own experiences with

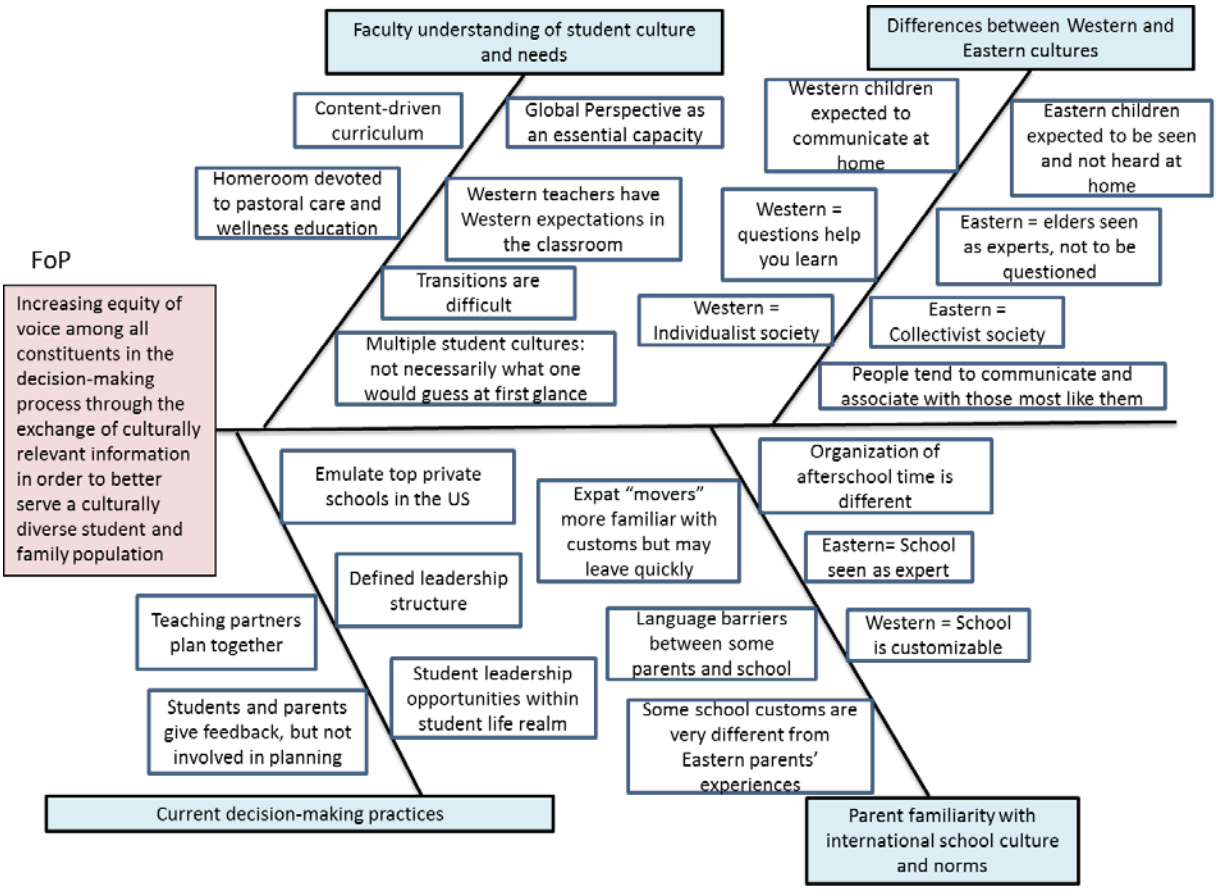

Figure 1. Fishbone diagram.

pedagogies that honor the wisdom of people and the power of place, I set out to work with a committed group of these individuals to bring multiple voices together to share stories and perspectives in order to act together in more effective and culturally-informed ways.

Framework for the Focus of Practice

As expressed in Figure 2, elements of each structural frame also informed this study; some frames are obvious on the surface and others operate at a more covert level, but all are very real in their operational pull. The socio-cultural frame receives the most emphasis because, at least initially, we acknowledged that all constituent voices are not equitably represented when it comes to the issues that impact them. Through this process, we were testing out processes to shift the dialogue patterns and give authority to more diverse voices for the purpose of making decisions. However, the other frames all informed the current system as well as the research and should not be ignored. Politically and philosophically, it is important to recognize that there are deeper systems and underlying beliefs that have created and contributed to inequity. In addition, the psychological elements of implicit bias and cultural identity and understanding that impact interpersonal relationships and the socio-cultural system point to the need to increase understanding on the micro level for individuals before proceeding to make changes at the structural or macro level. In addition, this study explored ways to incorporate individual voices into the change process, and, in order to achieve this task, I endeavored to examine the deeper reasons why they were not being included.

Indirectly, political and economic factors were also at play. There are political implications for engaging in CLEs, and these implications could also impact the economics of the school. Certain parents and students are often reluctant to express opinions on hot topics because they fear repercussions from more powerful authority figures. Asian parents and

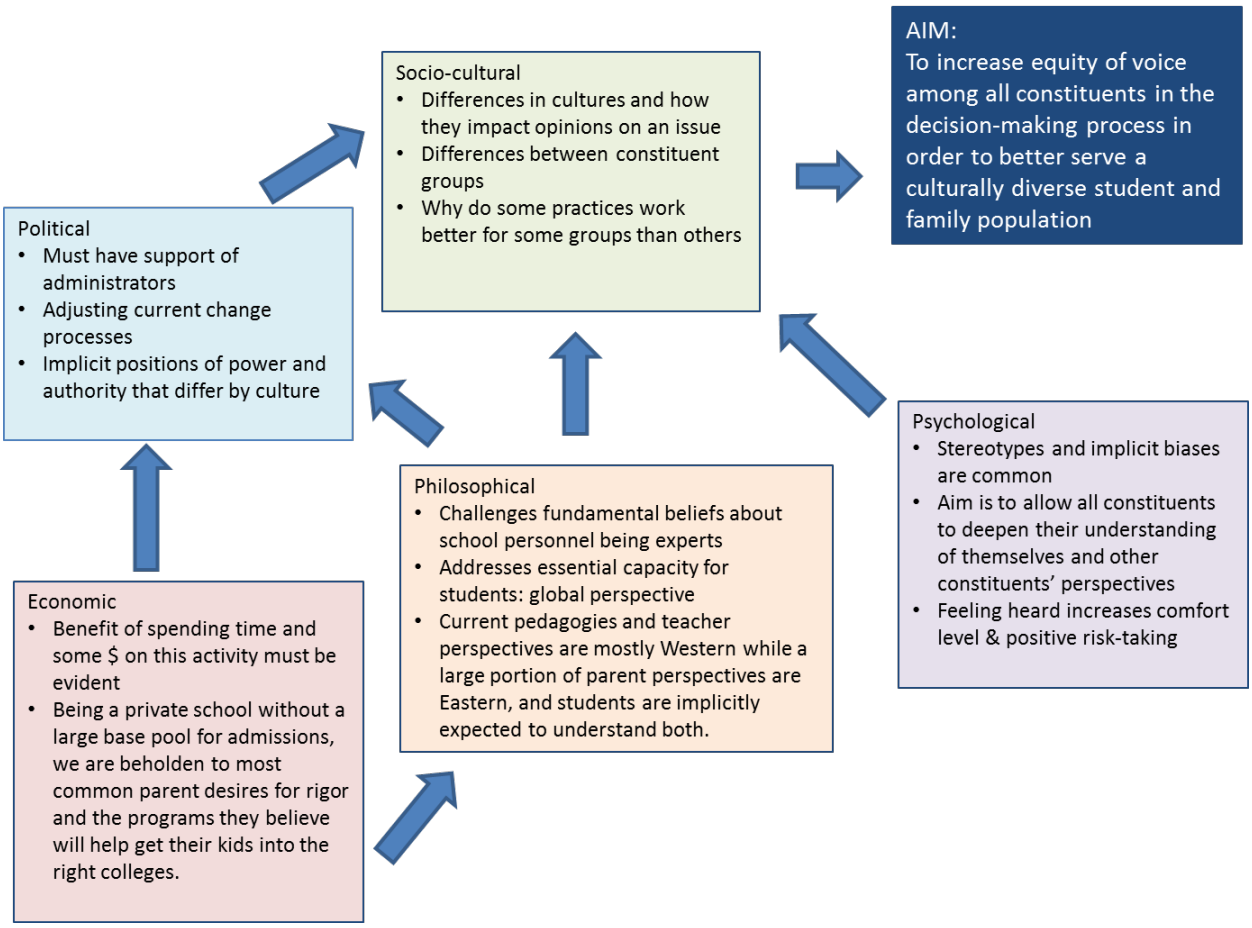

Figure 2. Frameworks impacting the focus of practice.

students, in particular, can be reluctant to speak out against an "expert." Therefore, in order for these CLEs to be successful in achieving their goals, it was critical to have support from administrators and all others involved.

Research Identity

While there are specific frames through which this focus of practice can be viewed, my own personal identity as a practitioner and a researcher also played a key role in this project. These roles were major underlying factors in my choice of focus of practice and the frames through which I examined it. I am a practitioner researcher who tends to look at the world through the socio-cultural and psychological frameworks first, seeking to understand both the personal motivations and the systems in which people find themselves. That is informed to a large degree by my counseling background in which I assume best intentions and look for the positive aspects of working with individuals. Thus, during the study I needed to be on guard to a certain degree to work against my implicit researcher bias, cautioning myself to not overlook the political and structural dimensions of this work. For example, I sometimes counsel students who are struggling with familial expectations to participate in certain activities or achieve certain things. I often encourage them to compare and contrast their parents' ideas and beliefs with their own while also looking at their sphere of control as well as their assets.

Yet I am fully aware of the socio-cultural dimensions of this advice and how I am bringing another more Western perspective about individual freedom to make decisions to this conversation with families that may have more collectivistic Eastern perspectives. However, I am also fully aware that understanding these systems and other background information is an important part of understanding students and helping them be successful. While I am similar to the majority of faculty and administrators at my school because I was raised and educated in the

Western hemisphere, I have taken the initiative to visit other schools often. I have visited many of the local schools in Taiwan that my students attended prior to entering my school, and I also visit other international schools whenever I go to conferences around the world. Each time I visit a new school either in Taiwan or abroad, I understand more about the way a group of my students may have learned prior to joining my school, which helps me to understand their perspective. I then try to incorporate that knowledge into my practice and discussions with constituents.

I consider my ability and desire to explore other cultural perspectives on education an asset to my identity as a practitioner researcher, and I also believe that it enhances my global perspective. It is out of this practice of seeking first to understand that I found my way to a focus of practice that is centered on helping others to do the same. Intuitively and through examples in my practice, I believe that understanding the unique perspectives and backgrounds of key players helps us help students be successful. Since we want all students to be successful, all voices need to be represented in order to meet that goal.

Improvement Goal

The goal of my participatory action research (PAR) project was to increase the equity of voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process in order to better serve a diverse population. Because individuals' and groups of individuals' respective positions and cultural experiences inform their perspectives, all involved in reform must first understand the needs and perspectives of each constituent group in order to meet their diverse needs in systematic ways. In order to achieve this goal, I aimed to establish a different way of facilitating change that takes into account multiple culturally-informed constituent voices and perspectives within the school. This exchange of information occurred through CLEs

focused on a specific topic slated for change and honoring the wisdom of participants and power of place.

Schools dealing with complex, difficult issues need processes in place that the utilize resources and assets of the community and engage constituents in ways that are equitable and inclusive. Therefore, as the co-practitioner research (CPR) team, made up of one co-counselor, the associate principal, one teacher, one parent, two students, and me, we co-planned and facilitated the CLE events. Together, the CPR team accepted the suggestion of homework as the topic for CLE discussions because it was relevant to all constituents and carried the approval of the administration. By including representatives from all constituent groups and facilitating collaborative discussions in which they shared their culturally-influenced perspectives about issues surrounding homework, we endeavored to better serve all constituents as well as find common ground to address the issue. Figure 3 illustrates the process whereby establishing the CLEs aimed to meet the goal of increasing equity of voice through collaborative discussions using culturally-sensitive pedagogies that encouraged all involved to share their perspectives and voice their needs.

The methodology also made use of the numerous assets we have within and around the school, illustrated in Figure 4. The physical and logistical resources are plentiful, the school vision and mission are oriented towards serving a diverse community, the administration welcomes feedback and change, and there is a wealth of knowledge contained in different constituent groups. CLEs prioritize both the wisdom of people and the power of place by utilizing the community assets and creating new opportunities for conversation between and among constituents where perspectives and knowledge are shared.

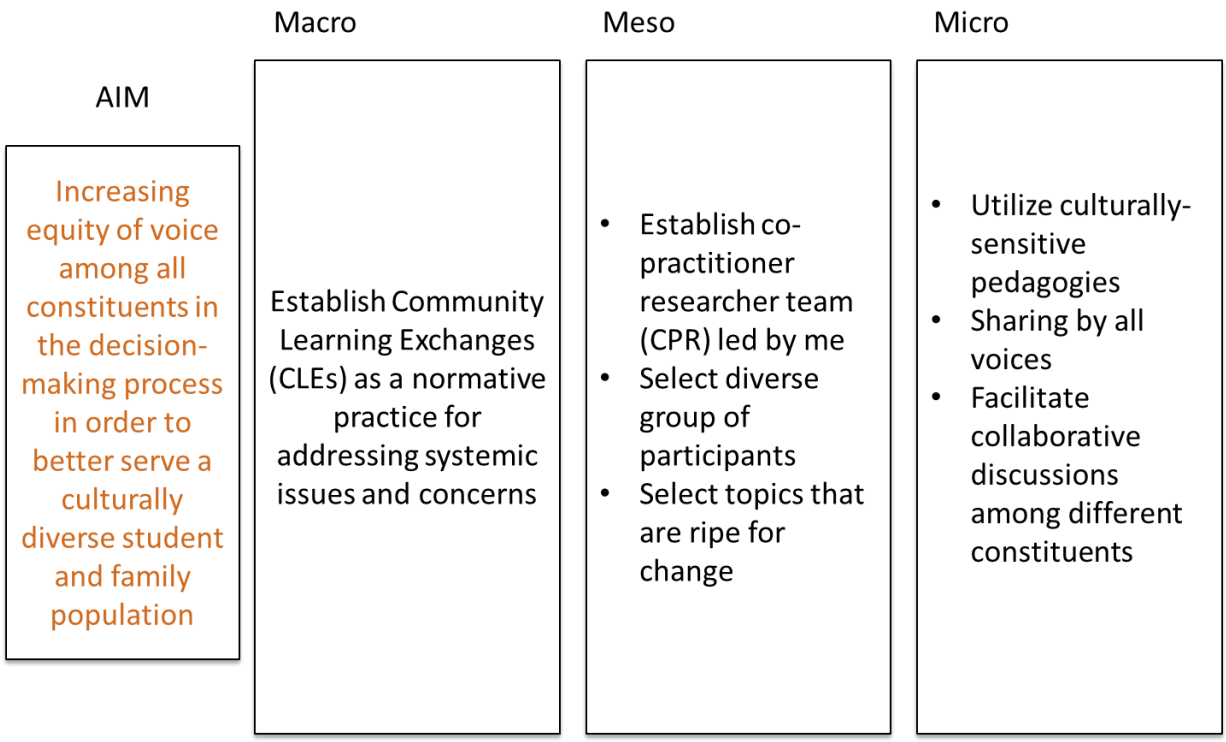

Figure 3. Driver diagram.

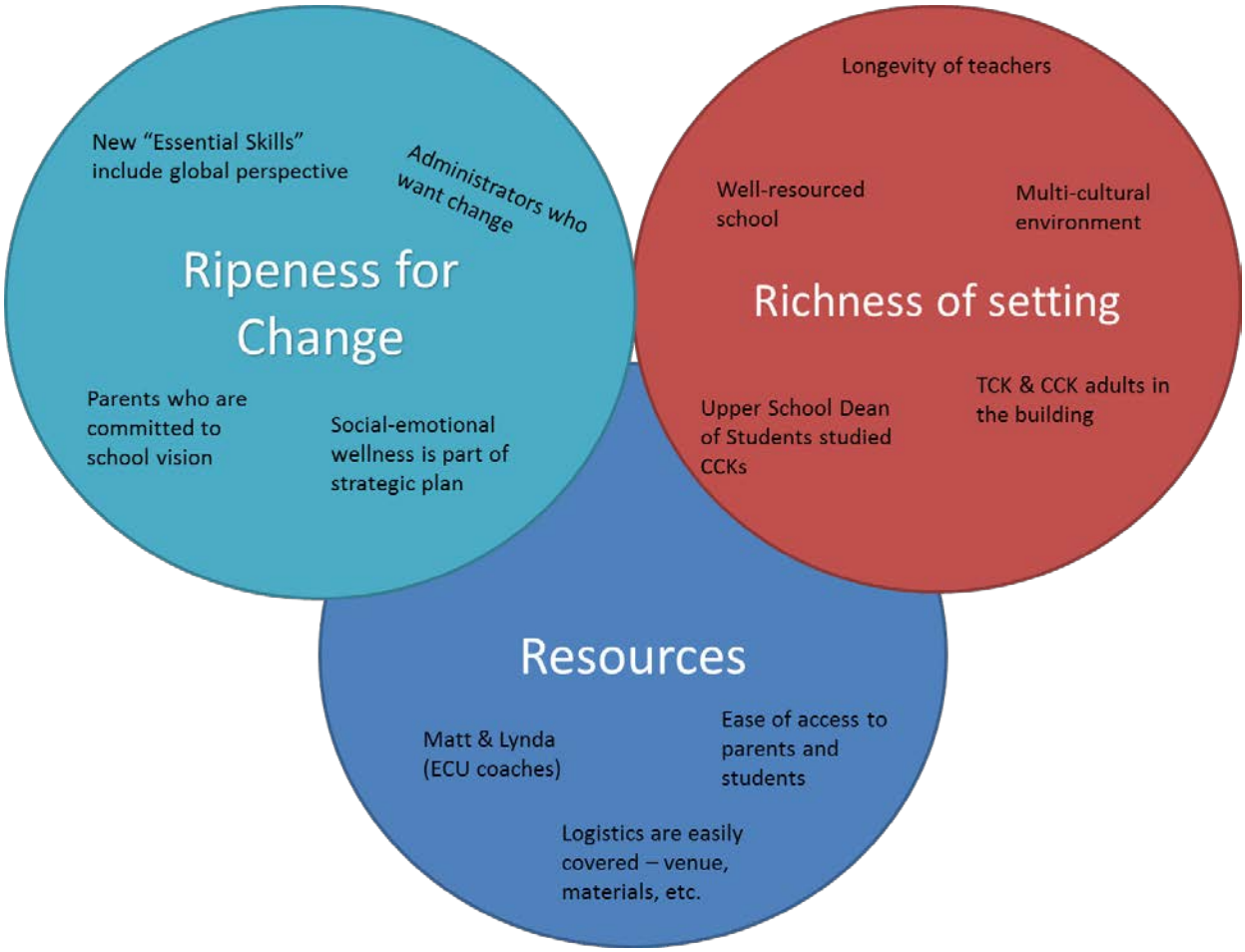

Figure 4. Circles of assets.

In addition to measuring the changes made as a result of CLEs, this PAR project documented how the discussions and establishment of connections impacted the constituents' perspectives on the issues and their roles within the school. Concurrently, the goal addressed the importance of making improvements systematically. Rather than jumping straight to solutions and decisions, the CLEs supported our intentions of exploring constituent perspectives on a specific topic while also engaging them in the change process. The CPR team co-planned and implemented the CLEs, studied their results and impacts, and then incorporated the results and recommendations into next step actions.

An overarching goal of this project was to measure the extent to which this work is transferred into school-wide and individual practices. While only a small sample of the population of all constituents was represented in the CLEs, traditional decision-makers (administrators) were involved and we expected the conversations to continue as representatives of other constituent groups continued to talk with others in their social networks. In addition to documenting perceived formal and informal changes in school-wide practices, documenting the extent to which engagement in this work transferred into the roles and practices of students, parents, teachers, and administrators would help address the extent to which we increased equity of voice and thereby better served the population. Through participants' continued interactions with each other in new ways as well as with others in their formal and informal networks, the intended systemic impacts permeated the school culture. Taken together, this provided information about how change can happen more systematically and more deeply than the current system in which a more homogeneous group is in charge of implementing changes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this PAR study was to better serve the diverse community of an international middle school by increasing equity of voice in decision-making processes. I aimed to do this by establishing CLEs as a new change process that involved representatives from all constituent groups. CLEs are collaborative events in which an eclectic and diverse group of constituents come together to share their expertise and perspectives on a given issue while working together to create equitable change within a specific context.

Research Questions

My approach helped answer one overarching question: Through the implementation of CLEs, to what extent do we increase equitable voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process at the school, thereby better serving a culturally diverse student and family population? The participatory action research sub-questions include:

- To what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants?
- How do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling?
- To what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers?
- How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?

Significance of the Focus of Practice

As this project focused on bringing the voices of all constituents into the decision-making process but also into the planning of that process, it is unique in its methodology for better serving a culturally diverse population. Thus, there are several ways in which research in this

area could lead to changes within the practices of individuals, the policies of institutions, and the research into equitable school reform.

Practice

With its aim to engage more constituents in sharing and collaborating, this project also endeavored to impact both individual and collective practices. Understanding the perspectives of others can help to dispel myths and stereotypes that individuals may hold true, and subsequently change the way they interact with those different from them. In addition, participating in the change process can impact the engagement of constituents in the change process as well as their commitment to the success of reforms.

Research

There is significant research on best practices for school reform. However, this research is almost exclusively conducted by Western researchers in Western contexts. This study can extend the knowledge base to an Asian international school setting. In addition, the majority of the research on school reform involves school professionals (e.g., teachers and administrators). This study adds to the growing body of research on including other constituents in the reform process, but also extends it to an international setting where the social and cultural norms are varied.

Policy

This study illuminates the repercussions of involving all constituent groups in the decision-making process in an international school. There are implications for small-scale reform in individual classrooms as well as more systemic changes to the standard operating procedures of the middle school. In addition, this research may also provide a model for large-scale reform

that can be replicated in other divisions of this school as well as in other schools around the world.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) Design Overview

This project's design involved three cycles of iterative participatory action research (PAR). Grounded in improvement science principles of finding what works, for whom, and under what circumstances through disciplined inquiry that utilizes networked communities, this project sought to bring the voices of multiple constituents together to discuss issues that are important to them and ultimately move towards action together (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LaMahieu, 2015). The first cycle was centered on bringing an initial group together while the second and third cycles made use of the data gathered and lessons learned in the previous cycles.

Cycle 1

Implementing the first CLE was the focus of the first PAR cycle. I put together the co-practitioner research (CPR) team, comprised of the associate principal, co-counselor, one parent, one teacher, one student and myself. We then focused on collecting an eclectic, diverse group of constituents that included students, parents, teachers, and administrators from multiple cultural and educational backgrounds. Invited participants mirrored the demographic makeup of the greater school population as closely as possible. A second task of the first PAR cycle was to settle on an interesting and relevant topic for the CLE and plan it accordingly with culturally sensitive pedagogies. This was overseen by my ECU coaches who guided us through the CLE planning stages. Finally, the first PAR cycle culminated in the first CLE on the topic of homework.

Cycle 2

PAR Cycle 2 began with a review of the feedback from the first CLE. An initial suggestion was to bring another student onto the CPR team, which we did. The new 7-person team used the data collected during the initial CLE to adjust the content and pedagogies planned for the next CLE. The team then facilitated the CLE and collected feedback on participant perspectives on the impact of their CLE experiences. I also kept track of other related meetings and conversations that occurred throughout the cycle. These were recorded in meeting notes and personal memos.

Cycle 3

The final PAR cycle focused on determining the broader systemic impacts of the CLEs on the school as well as smaller shifts that occurred for individual participants. I investigated changes that occurred as a result of collaboration across boundaries within and beyond CLEs. These changes were related to homework policies and procedures as well as individual changes to philosophies about homework, others, and themselves. I also co-facilitated two initiatives to increase student voice and continued to meet and work with the CPR team. Throughout all three cycles, I investigated how this work transferred into my own leadership.

Study Limitations

As described earlier, my position as a practitioner within the setting of this study colors my understanding of my focus of practice and its implications, but it also placed me squarely within the action space as one of the people closest to the issues and therefore in a position to be a catalyst for change (Guajardo et al., 2016). In order to safeguard against my own biases, I worked with a CPR team made up of other constituents of the school to plan and implement the CLEs as well as discuss the data collected using a member check strategy (Rudestam & Newton,

2001). This study is also limited by the sample size and purposeful sampling methodology. While there may be useful implications for a wider audience of practitioners and researchers, the conclusions drawn in this study are specific to this particular context alone.

Chapter Summary

The goals of education have changed, but reform processes have largely remained unchanged. In order to equitably meet the needs of a culturally diverse student and parent population, schools must develop new methods of reform that equitably engage the voices of the diverse constituents in the process. The middle school is currently ripe for reform initiatives with courageous new leadership and a great deal of wisdom in the culturally-informed perspectives of constituents (students, parents, teachers, and administrators).

This PAR study proposes a new process of engaging an eclectic and diverse group of constituents in unpacking and discussing issues in order to make recommendations for reform. The cycles of inquiry constructed this process and tested its outcomes and impacts. In the following chapters, I describe the key elements of this project within this specific context. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the existing literature related to equity of voice, the needs of a diverse population, and the utility of the CLE framework. Chapter 3 explores the specific context, the people and the place, for this PAR project. Then, Chapter 4 explains the methodology and design for the project, and the subsequent Chapters 5, 6, and 7 chronicle the findings from each iterative cycle of inquiry. Finally, Chapter 8 discussed the key findings and implications for practice, policy, and research.

CHAPTER 2: FOP PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE

Introduction

The purpose of education has been debated since the inception of formalized schooling. Traditionally, democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility have been seen as the aims to prepare students for adult life (Labaree, 2008). However, current accountability demands are clearly focused on student academic achievement. The specific strategies to achieve results is often cloaked in educational jargon such as “data-driven” and “research-based.” However, what these strategies look like in practice and the question of whether or not there are other strategies to achieve the educational outcomes are still in doubt. What is known is the realization that school leaders and policy-makers alike need innovative strategies to meet the needs of their students.

As an emerging researcher, my work will be judged on the process by which my research and my Co-Practitioner Researchers engage in the work of increasing the exchange of culturally-relevant information between and among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in order to inform school-wide decisions and better serve a diverse student population. As a result, if we are to be successful with bringing a new change process into my school community and sustaining it, we must be able to support the process with evidence. The purpose of this chapter is to provide evidence in regard to the content of this research proposal as well as the process. This chapter provides an understanding of both the findings and the limitations of the literature (Boote & Beile, 2005).

Illustrated in Figure 5, the chapter begins with an exploration of the content literature—the literature related to my focus of practice and participatory action research project. First, I discuss the benefits and challenges of a diverse student population: exploring the emerging

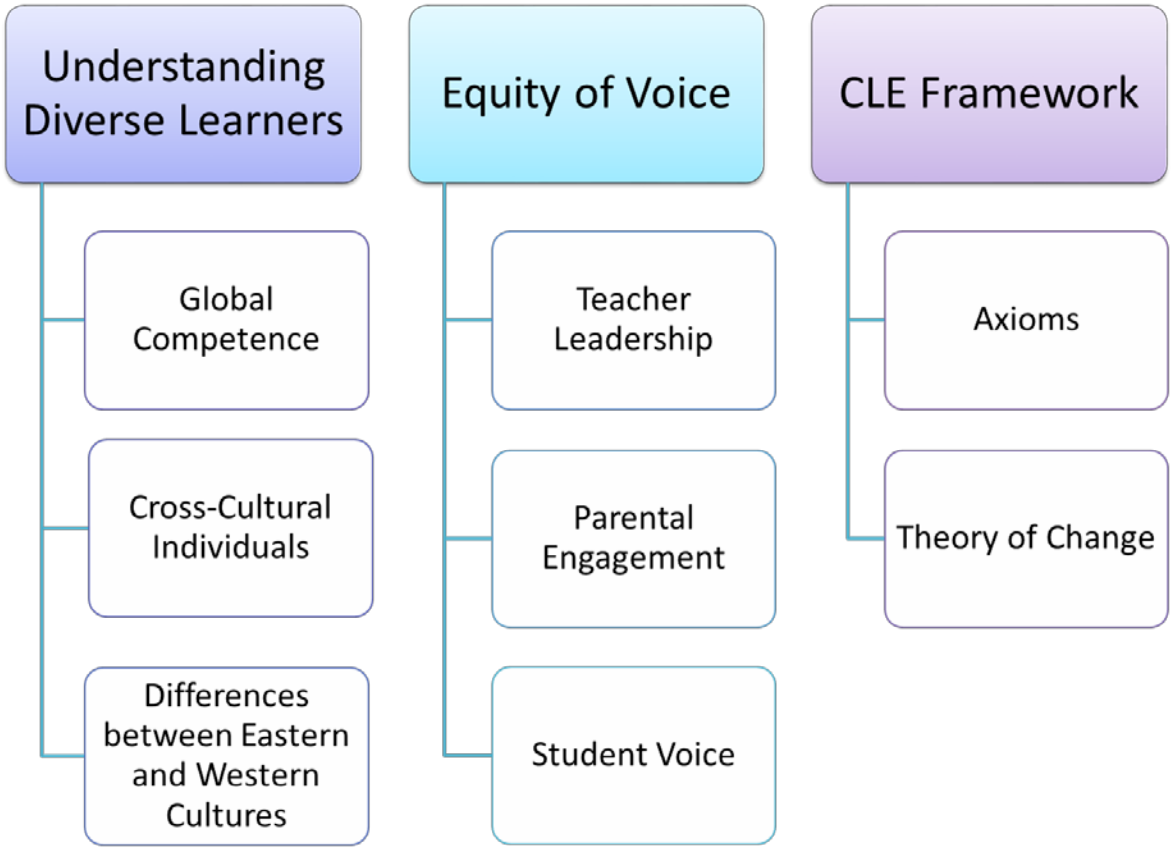

Figure 5. Literature bins.

emphasis on global competence, the specific differences between Eastern and Western learning cultures, and the unique needs of individuals who live in multiple cultures. I next turn to the process literature. Here I examine the literature surrounding the need for each constituent group (students, parents, and teachers) to have equitable voice in the school-wide decision-making process. Finally, I compare this literature to the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) framework that utilizes the power of place (which includes culture) and the wisdom of (all) people. The CLE framework responds to the needs of diverse learners in a multicultural setting to contribute their voice to school decisions that affect them.

Understanding Diverse Learners

While all schools educate students who are diverse in a myriad of different ways, international schools are perhaps even more diverse and complicated as they endeavor to educate students who are experiencing multiple cultures on a daily basis. As this PAR project aims to better serve a diverse population in a Western school within an Eastern context, understanding the complexities and variations that influence international school students and their cultural identities is of vital importance.

Culture is a complicated term that can be described as having three main aspects: the material artifacts (tools, food, clothing, etc.) that group members use within the world, the social institutions (language and social conventions) through which members relate to each other, and the beliefs, values and practices that characterize the way group members think about and relate to the world (OECD, 2016). However, the students who attend international schools rarely live or develop within a single culture. Therefore, identity development in a diverse situation for the students in international schools is complicated by virtue of their exposure to multiple cultures and their mobility within and between them. This section begins with an exploration of the

"global competence" that is necessary for students to be successful in an increasingly diverse world. As such, attention to practices that promote global competence is important; so too is using processes in our work with students, teachers, and parents that mirror those recommendations so we can ensure that students gain knowledge and skill in global competence. I then turn to the specific nature of international school students as cross-cultural individuals who experience a distinct set of benefits and challenges that impact their school experiences. Finally, the epistemic and ontological stance of a student in a Western-oriented school but who is living in an Asian society requires that we understand the differences in the educational philosophy of both approaches. Overall, the complications of merging two (or more) identities in cross-cultural educational experiences is a critical understanding for the success of this PAR project.

Global Competence

While international school students are exposed to different cultures and perspectives, the increasing mobility and interconnectedness of people around the globe has led to a rise in the literature calling for adaptability, perspective-taking, and global understanding as pathways towards success for both students and the teachers who guide their learning (Boix Mansilla, 2016; Taylor, 2014; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008; Tucker, 2016). Educators are increasingly called on to prepare students for college and career and, concurrently, to instill the capacities necessary for solving problems that individual nations and the world are facing, such as environmental protection, poverty, and human rights (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). These capacities are described by many different terms, including intercultural awareness, international mindedness, global perspective, and global readiness (Fezler & Brown, 2011; Taylor, 2014; Their, 2016). One term that brings these ideas together is that of global competence, which is defined as "the capacity to analyze global and intercultural issues critically and from multiple

perspectives, to understand how differences affect perceptions, judgments, and ideas of self and others, and to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with others from different backgrounds on the basis of a shared respect for human dignity" (OECD, 2016, p. 4). This term includes four dispositions and dialogue processes for development; as well, it offers metrics for assessing global competence domains.

Dispositions and dialogue. Expanding on her work with the Global Competence Task Force and the Asia Society, Boix Mansilla (2016) describes global competence as being achieved through four global thinking dispositions that can be modeled and established within schools and classrooms. The first global thinking disposition is the tendency to inquire about the world. The student should expand his or her world view by not only seeking of knowledge but by focusing on key knowledge that helps to increase his or her understanding. The second disposition is understanding multiple perspectives, which encourages students to attend to the culturally-informed beliefs of others while resisting stereotypes and seeking common ground. The third global thinking disposition involves respectful dialogue with others, including respectful listening and sharing one's own beliefs. The final global thinking disposition is an inclination to take responsible action with others. This disposition involves noticing opportunities for improvement and collaborating with others to make necessary changes.

Taken together, the first three global thinking dispositions also lead to intercultural sensitivity, which is part of global competence. In his article examining different assessment measures Taylor (2014) describes intercultural sensitivity as "a mindset focused not only on knowing and understanding the other but on assimilating ideas and being able to move seamlessly between different cultures without losing one's own identity" (p. 33). As Taylor points out, while intercultural sensitivity and awareness are present more often in students

attending international schools, they are not evenly developed across student bodies. Therefore, teachers and students develop their global competence more systematically if we use pedagogies and practices that foster the goals we want to achieve. Therefore, specific pedagogies and practices must be put into place for teachers and students to develop their global competence.

Building on the premise that understanding the perspectives of those who are different happens most effectively through dialogue, Cook-Sather (2015) studied the impact of 250 professor/student partnerships in the SaLT program at Haverford and Bryn Mawr College. While these partnerships occurred across differences of power, that includes differences of culture, race, and educational experience. By examining feedback data as well as interviews and conversations, Cook-Sather found that communication and collaboration across differences led to a greater sense of connectedness as well as empowerment and intentional critical reflection that led to improved educational practices. This model of collaboration with others who hold different views, identities, and positions of power, invokes experiences of understanding different perspectives but also dialoguing and acting with others. While this study is based on one program and a much different age group, its findings are still relevant for those working with middle school students because it indicates that age and power differences can be overcome when collaborative partnerships are constructed together.

Standards and metrics. Due to the fact that they primarily serve cross-cultural individuals who will undoubtedly live and work all over the globe, many international schools, including this one, have "international mindedness" or "global perspective" as an expected learning result for students. In order to provide guidance on how to achieve this result in systematic ways, the International School Counseling Association (ISCA) has developed a "global perspectives domain" as part of its comprehensive international counseling model

(Fezler & Brown, 2011). This comprehensive counseling model builds on the success of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) model's impact on achievement through its academic, career, and personal-social domains. However, the ISCA Model also acknowledges the impact of cross-cultural and transient lifestyles on achievement. Therefore, the ISCA model establishes five additional standards for the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of successful graduates:

A. Develop an understanding of culture as a social construct.
B. Acquire an awareness of their family culture and cultural identity.
C. Understand their host country and home(s) country's cultures.
D. Develop a personal practice for applying intercultural competence and bridging successfully across cultural difference.
E. Acquire knowledge and attitudes to manage transition effectively.

(Fezler & Brown, 2011, p. 13)

The ISCA model defines standards for global perspectives or global competence that should be addressed in schools, but it does not utilize a measurement tool for assessing how well students achieve the desired result. While many surveys and inventories have been developed to assess global competence, Their (2016) points out in his review of five such assessment tools, they lack a common definition of the term and rely solely on self-report data. In addition, only one of the five studies he discussed used participants from multiple countries.

Alternatively, the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an international assessment tool developed by the OECD member countries to compare student achievement in several subject areas. They have recently released information about their global competence assessment, which was set to launch as part of PISA 2018 (OECD, 2016). As

students from around the world participate in this assessment, it may be useful as the first global assessment of global competence. In addition, it measures both self-reported attitudes and the cognitive knowledge and skills required for understanding and interacting with other cultures.

In this section, I discussed the literature surrounding the importance of global competence and its multiple components. Being able to interact with people from multiple cultural backgrounds as well as analyze global and intercultural issues is particularly important for international school students, and schools are beginning to recognize this as an essential capacity and look for ways to incorporate it into the curriculum. I explored standards that schools can use to help students develop global competence, but these are in early stages and clear methods and procedures for teaching and assessing global competence are not yet available. However, the emergence and clarification of the term is still particularly useful for this project as it helps to define and describe some of the aspects which we already know occur in international school students and will be required of all constituents participating in the CLEs central to this project. In the next section, I discuss how the cross-cultural identity of international school students who transition between cultures regularly lends itself to the development of global competence.

Cross-Cultural Individuals (CCI)

Culture is not just the foods and customs seen on the surface but guided by unseen, deeply-help worldviews and beliefs. These beliefs are taught from birth by the family and reinforced by the community. However, cross-cultural individuals spend time during their formative years in multiple cultures and can be influenced by very different and sometimes conflicting sets of beliefs and customs. Therefore, these individuals have a unique worldview that blends different cultural values together in a distinct combination. To some degree, all

international school students can be classified under the umbrella term of cross-cultural individuals, but a variety of more specific terms lend more clarity to the types of experiences that characterize the experiences of different groups. In this section, I explore the different types of cross-cultural individuals as well as the benefits and challenges that are hallmarks of their lived experiences and influence their perspectives on education and schooling. Understanding the characteristics and challenges that often develop as a result of membership in this group will provide information that will aid the selection of strategies and pedagogies to be utilized in this participatory action research project.

Across cultures: Third Culture Kids (TCKs), Cross-Cultural Kids (CCK) and cross-cultural individuals. The most widely studied and widely known term to describe cross-cultural individuals is "third culture kid (TCK)". First coined by Ruth Hill Useem and John Useem in the 1950s, Pollack and Van Reken (2009) literally wrote the book on these individuals. Drawing from their years of research and interviews with these individuals, they define a TCK as "a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture" (p. 13). Illustrated in Figure 6, these children integrate aspects of each culture into their own experience, but they tend to feel most similar to other TCKs rather than members of either their host or home cultures.

As Pollack and Van Reken (2009) point out, the TCK experience is defined by living in both a cross-cultural and a highly mobile world. The children live in multiple cultures, often travel frequently, and many have gone through multiple moves and/or have parents that come from different cultures.

While TCKs are traditionally children who leave one culture to live in another, other children interact with multiple cultures in many other ways. Therefore, the model expanded to

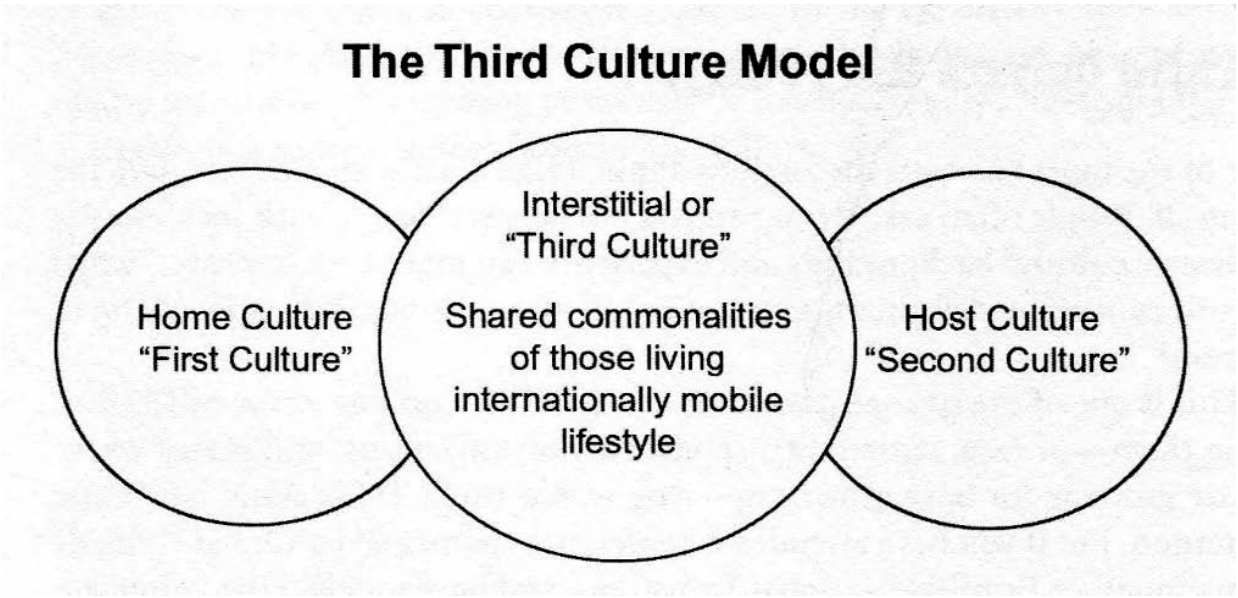

Figure 6. Third culture model (Pollack & Van Reken, 2009, p. 14).

include these individuals, as illustrated in Figure 7. A cross-culture kid is "a person who is living or has lived in – or meaningfully interacted with – two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during childhood," (Pollack & van Reken, 2009, p. 31). Many students in international schools fall into the "Educational CCK" category as well as the "Bi/Multicultural" or "Bi/Multiracial" categories and many are part of multiple categories.

For the purpose of this project, I have chosen to use the broader term of "cross-cultural individuals" for two reasons. First, I prefer to be more inclusive rather than excluding either TCKs or CCKs as both exist in international schools. In addition, while preteens and teenagers are still within the "formative years" used as a marker for inclusion in these groups, as a middle school counselor, I am fully aware they prefer not to be known as "kids". However, whenever I discuss research that has been performed with a specific sub-group, I use the term as chosen by the researcher.

Benefits and challenges. Identity formation is an important part of adolescence; however, CCIs who experience disruptions to their support systems, as well as conflicting information, can take longer to achieve this task (Pollack & Van Reken, 2009). Their own high mobility, as well as the mobility of the significant others around them, means that these individuals tend to experience grief and loss more often than mono-cultural, stationary individuals. Not only are CCIs more likely to move from one place to another, leaving friends and mentors behind, by virtue of being surrounded by other CCIs in international schools, they also go through the experience of being left behind by friends and transitioning into new social groups (Pollack & Van Reken, 2009).

In addition, CCIs often struggle with a sense of belonging and feelings of homelessness, the basics of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2016). It is hard for these individuals to

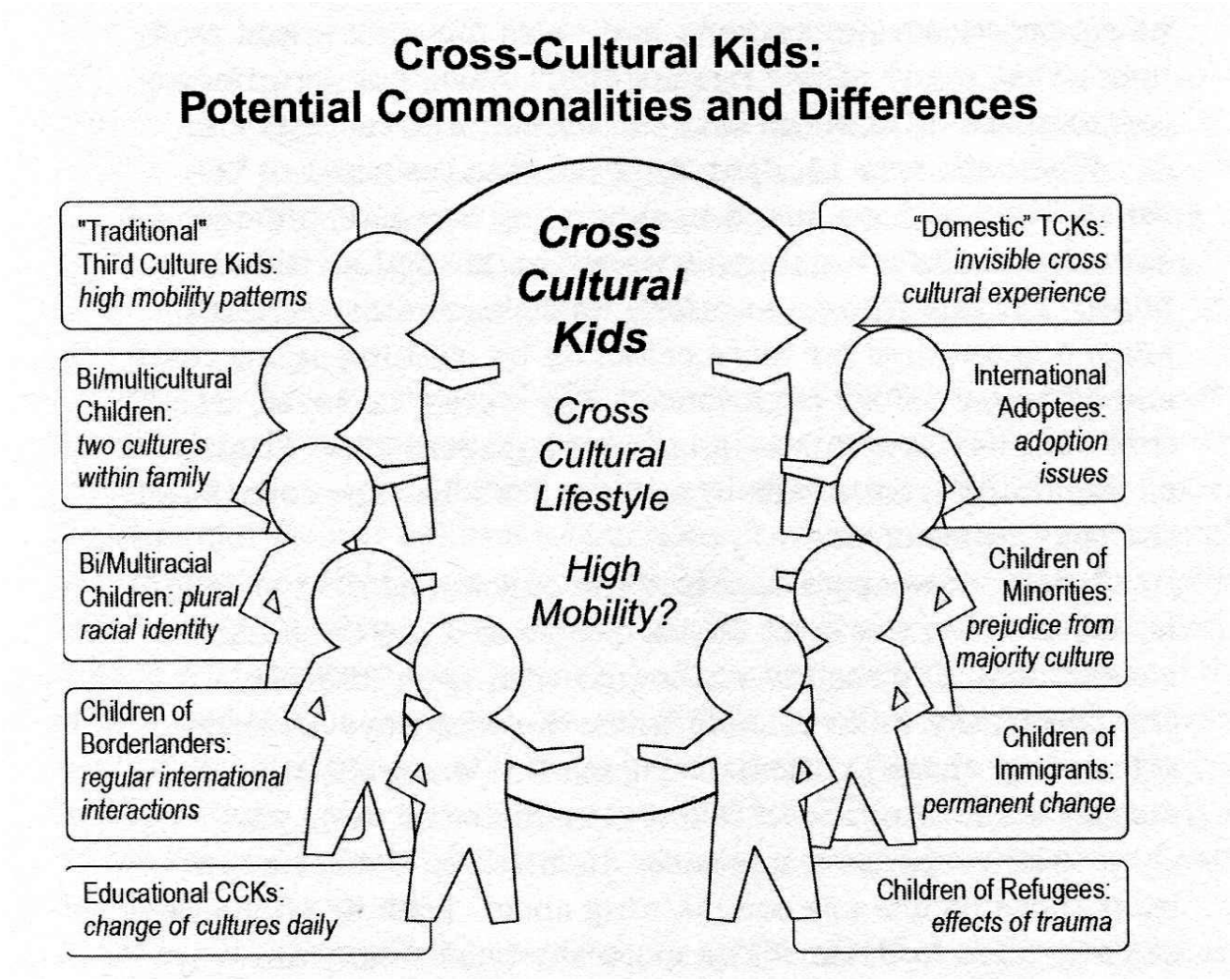

Figure 7. Cross-cultural kids: Potential commonalities and differences (Pollack & Van Reken, 2009, p. 35).

answer the question “Where are you from?” and some often they find that they do not feel truly at home with any single cultural group (Moore & Baker, 2012). In their study of 19 adult CCIs, Moore and Baker found that all had grappled with trying to define their cultural identity and had varying degrees of feeling that they belong in their home and host countries. These CCIs incorporated aspects of multiple cultures into their identities and many reported that while they did not feel that they truly belonged anywhere, they were able to “pass” and adapt to multiple cultural situations smoothly. The vast majority of Moore and Baker’s participants said that their experiences were mostly beneficial despite some challenges.

Fail, Thompson, and Walker (2004) found that cross-cultural experiences can lead to improved social skills and adaptability. In their surveys and interviews with eleven former international school students, a theme of constructive marginality emerged; despite not feeling as if they belonged in any culture, the adult CCIs felt that their multicultural identities provided them an advantage in that they could function in multiple different places and relate to many different types of people.

Long’s (2016) dissertation studying the experiences of ten educational CCKs, Taiwanese youth who spent their formative years in Taiwan but went to an international school and then moved to college in the U.S. found that they exhibited similar benefits and challenges to other TCKs who grew up outside their home cultures. The students reported similarly expanded worldviews as well as a diminished sense of belonging in either American or Taiwanese settings. While able to move seamlessly between cultures, these individuals felt that they could not describe themselves as wholly American or Taiwanese, and they identified most closely with other CCIs.

All three studies had relatively small sample sizes and involved adults looking back on their experiences rather than studying cross-cultural individuals as they are going through them. However, their findings support Pollack and Van Reken's assertion that cross-cultural experiences, while potentially difficult at the time, can lead to a higher degree of adaptability and perspective-taking, meaning that CCIs can understand the worldviews of others more readily than their monoculture counterparts and are more able to adapt to diverse situations. While identity development happens over time, and benefits are not often felt until later in life, areas of future research could include longitudinal studies of CCI experiences as well as benefits and challenges that occur as they move from environment to environment.

In this section, I have provided an overview of the types of multi- or cross-cultural experiences that children in international schools have in common. While the transient nature of international school students carries challenges, the adaptability and perspective-taking abilities that are characteristic of these students are also hallmarks of the global competence discussed earlier and will be particularly useful in the CLE methodology of this project where they will be asked to share and discuss their perspectives with others who may have differing viewpoints. In the next section, I go into more detail about the cross-cultural differences regarding epistemological and ontological stances of the experiences of students experiencing both Western and Eastern cultures that further influence the development of their global competence.

Differences between Eastern and Western Cultures of Learning

The context for this project is an American school located in Asia where all constituents are simultaneously experiencing both Eastern and Western cultures. Many students have attended Taiwanese or other Asian schools prior to joining this school, and many move between the Western school context and an Eastern family context every day. Therefore, the differences

between Eastern and Western cultures, particularly with respect to educational values, are especially important in the quest to understand student and family needs. Students have an epistemological milieu in which they come to know and learn, and that affects their perspective or ontological stance about themselves and their world. Because of their intertwined realities at this and other Asian international schools, we have to pay attention to how the Eastern and Western culture epistemologies and values co-exist as we design our programming.

In this section, I describe the differences between Eastern and Western cultures as they relate to education, learning, and schooling. I begin with an understanding of orientation towards learning followed by expectations within the classroom, and finally, the role of the teacher. However, it is important to remember that the differences stated in the following paragraphs are generalizations and do not apply universally to all learners in a given group. Many variations occur both within and between groups; as Ryan and Louie (2007) point out: assuming that the differences are dichotomous and unchanging can lead to misrepresentations and misunderstandings. Therefore, the differences described between Eastern/Confucian heritage cultures and Western cultures are meant to explain the underlying assumptions and beliefs held by and about these two cultures.

Orientation. In her book on the subject and illustrated in Figure 8, Li (2012) describes the differences between learning in the West and learning in the East as primarily a matter of orientation. According to Li, Western learning processes are geared towards understanding the self and the world while learning in the East is geared towards perfecting the self. Therefore, Western mind-oriented processes geared towards understanding the world while Eastern learning processes are virtue-oriented processes geared towards self-perfection. In the West, Li explains, ideal learners are described by the way they interact with the material they are learning, by

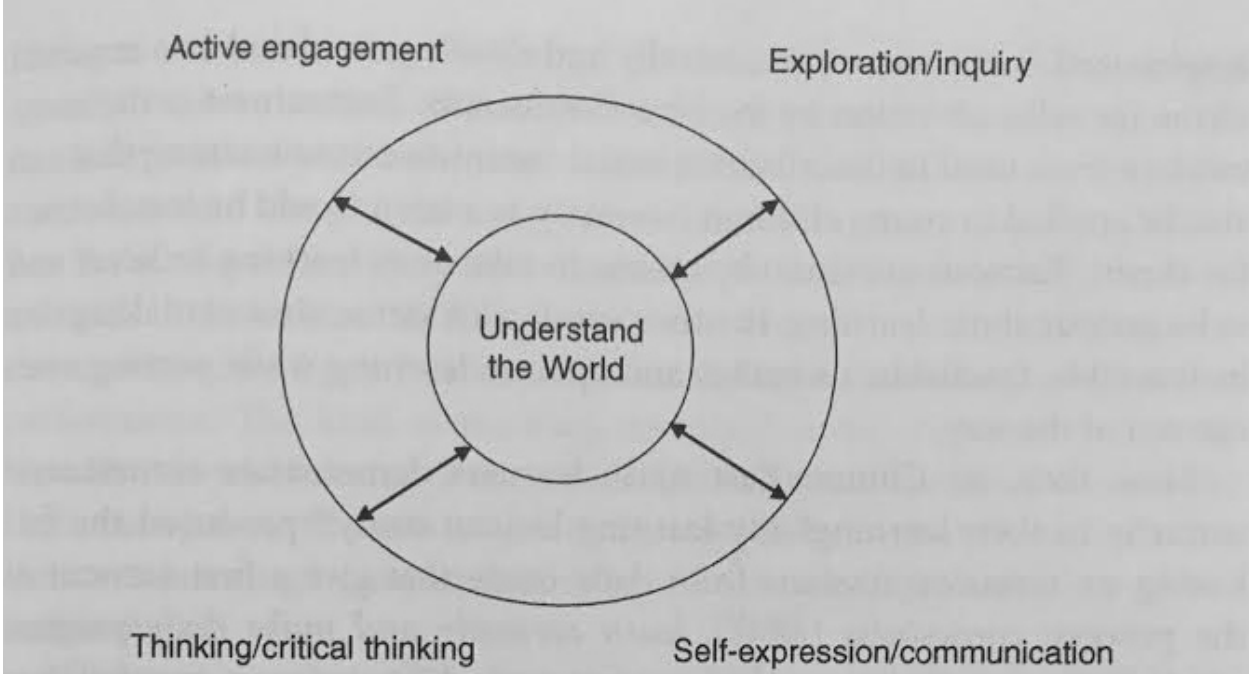

FIGURE 4.1. Diagram for mind-oriented learning processes in the West.

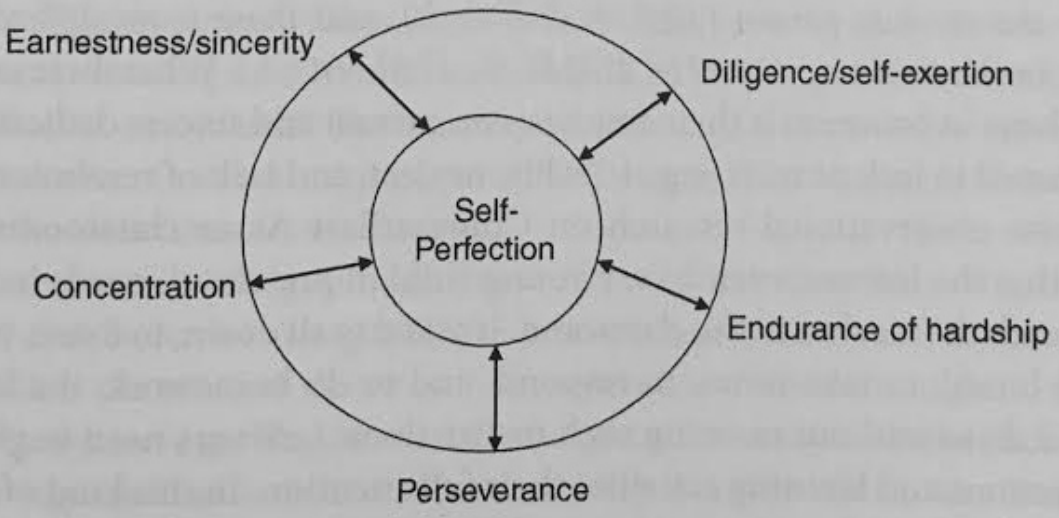

FIGURE 4.2. Diagram for virtue-oriented learning processes in China/East Asia.

Figure 8. Learning processes in the West vs. East Asia (Li, 2012, p. 123).

doing, exploring, questioning, and communicating their thinking. In the East, ideal learners are described by their virtues and the ways they commit themselves to learning, by being sincere and diligent, concentrating, persevering, and enduring hardship.

Li (2012) found that Eastern and Western students differ in their time orientation. Eastern students, guided by Confucian principles, are expected to develop a personal conviction toward lifelong learning. Therefore, they do not expect learning to be fun or interesting; instead, they unceasingly pursuing knowledge in order to reach their perfect selves. Western students, on the other hand, are more guided by the need for achievement, working to achieve success and avoid failure. As part of this Western model, students pursue knowledge in order to satisfy their curiosity and interest while also developing competence. The implication is that goals can be achieved and mastered, and, therefore, pride of accomplishment can be felt. As one example, Li illustrated this difference in time orientation through a study that found European-American students to be more motivated when told a math technique would help them achieve a proximal goal of calculating more quickly while East Asian students were more motivated when told the technique would help them achieve a distal goal of being good at math in the future, which is related to the ultimate goal of Eastern education: perfecting the self.

Expectations in the classroom. These differences in learning orientations often translate to classroom expectations as well. Western learning is oriented toward understanding the world, an important tenet of Western education is teaching students how to think critically. Students are expected to ask questions, challenge authority, and play devil's advocate as part of their quest for understanding a topic critically. Engaging, charismatic speakers are idealized. In contrast, Eastern learning, guided by Confucius and Lao Tzu, teaches contemplative reflection and values action over words. Similarly, achievement of Buddhist nirvana happens through quiet

meditation. Students are not taught to be completely silent, but they are encouraged to be cautious about their speech (Li, 2012).

Unsurprisingly, these competing differences in the learning processes of Eastern and Western education create corresponding differences in classrooms. Neihoff, Turnley, Yen, and Sheu (2001) surveyed over 500 American and Taiwanese university students, finding that those in Taiwan preferred more formal classrooms and fewer group activities than their American counterparts who preferred more informal teachers who were more interactive and assigned group work. Taiwanese students were also more likely to appreciate teaching that explains the theory behind a given model rather than utilizing the application-based problems favored by American students.

Role of the teacher. The differences in ways students learn in Eastern and Western cultures are exemplified by the role of the teacher in these societies. Fwu and Wang (2002) surveyed the literature on teacher satisfaction, pay, and social standing between American and Taiwanese teachers. They found that while Western teachers continue to fight for respect and equal pay, in Eastern cultures, teachers are revered as moral role models and enjoy a higher than average salary compared to people in other jobs with the same level of education. Eastern students are expected to show respect to their teacher who is a moral leader and the ultimate learned scholar. A "Teacher's Day" is celebrated in Taiwan on Confucius' birthday each year.

Similarly, Li (2012) referenced a study by Hsueh and colleagues that asked students to explain why they should respect their teachers. European American students were more likely to choose obedience to authority as a reason for respect whereas Asian students were more likely to respect teachers as a model to emulate. At the same time, Western students are more likely to question or debate their teachers as part of the critical thinking model while Eastern learners are

more likely to believe the teacher is correct and respect the teacher's authority (Neihoff et al., 2001).

Multiple differences between Eastern and Western cultures can manifest within classrooms and schools, including the concept of how learning happens and the resulting roles of the students and teachers within the classroom. Learning to navigate these differences and incorporating both worldviews into their identities as learners are important tasks of cross-cultural individuals such as those who make up international schools.

Summary

International school students are hard to define culturally as a group because they concurrently inhabit many different cultural spaces. However, while certain challenges characterize their experiences, they gain competencies as a result of their experiences. As international schools endeavor to serve such a diverse population with such divergent expectations and conceptions of education, it is important to utilize the global competencies that are already developing within students by virtue of their cross-cultural experiences. In addition, Western schools operating in Eastern contexts must understand the differences in learning orientations and methods of self-expression, look for common ground, and devote energy to helping students develop their own unique blends of these cultural identities. Within the scope of this project, I take this as support for my theory that in order to better serve a culturally diverse population, culturally-sensitive dialogue must occur between and among all constituents. In the next section, I describe the importance of incorporating members of multiple constituent groups into the reform process as they too have differing viewpoints. However, it will be important to remember the myriad of different experiences that may be impacting the attitudes and beliefs of

parents, students, and teachers as well as the strengths that may be developing or have developed as a result of these experiences.

Equity of Voice

The majority of schools the world over state a preference for including the voices of the teachers, administrators, parents, and students in school policies and decision-making. However, including these voices in equitable ways is a complicated and difficult undertaking, and even the most dedicated school leaders can meet with a myriad of obstacles. In multicultural and international schools, equity of voice in decision-making about school policies and practices takes on the components of diversity and multicultural assets and issues noted in the first section of this chapter, including power dynamics, different but often unexpressed complications as a result of cultural contexts, and differing views about learning and teaching. Therefore, examining participatory equity requires an analysis of different perspectives about engaging all school constituents and choosing a process that will take into account the multicultural perspectives. In this section, I explore the literature regarding how students, parents, and teachers have been included in the decision-making and reform efforts within schools. As each constituent group is different, in addition to the multicultural assets and issues referenced above, there are different supporting and complicating factors by virtue of each group's positionality within the school. What follows is an examination of the literature regarding each constituent group's inclusion in school decision-making as well as suggestions for procedures, limitations, and cultural influences. Coupled with the information shared in the first part of this chapter, these lessons guide this project's goal of incorporating all voices into the decision-making process.

Teacher Voice

While teachers often have a good deal of control within their own classrooms, the number of new initiatives and mandates from above seems to grow each year. Therefore, it is not surprising that The U.S. Center on Education Policy's most recent national survey of teachers found that the majority of teachers feel that their opinions are not heard at the national (94%), state (94%), district (76%) or even building (54%) level, and that feeling heard was linked to job satisfaction (Rentner, Kober, Frizzell, & Ferguson, 2016). Designating this the most troubling finding of the report, Rentner et al. (2016) call for schools to "create a more systematic process for teachers to share their views and expertise" (p. 9).

While a slight majority of teachers in the Rentner et al. (2016) report did not feel that their voices mattered in their school decision-making, 45% did perceive that their opinions were considered at their schools. Clearly, some schools and administrators have established ways to systematically involve teachers in decision-making, and the growing body of literature suggests that reform efforts implemented in collaboration with teachers are more successful than those that come from a top-down approach (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). The literature suggests that these improved outcomes occur by allowing some degree of autonomy for practice decisions, developing collective efficacy through peer teacher interactions, and setting up collaborative work on teams.

Distributed leadership. Teacher leadership has been studied extensively in the past few decades. Building on the work of York-Barr and Duke through 2004, Wenner and Campbell (2017) reviewed the next 20 years of literature on teacher leadership. Examining 54 peer-reviewed studies of teacher leadership, they found several themes of teacher leadership: it extends beyond classroom walls, should support professional learning, should involve decision-

making to some extent, should be aimed at improving student learning and success, and involves working toward whole school improvement.

Many of Wenner and Campbell's studies used the framework of distributed leadership as their lens for studying teacher leadership. This framework describes leadership that "involves the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning," (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, p. 24). A distributed leadership perspective recognizes that there are multiple people within a school who take on leadership roles, both formally designated and informally adopted. In addition, it is primarily concerned with the interactions between leaders and those they lead. Finally, it acknowledges the importance of the situation, the tools, and routines through which these interactions are built (Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

Outcomes. In their review of 57 studies, Wenner and Campbell (2017) found recurring evidence that teacher leaders and those they led felt their skills improved as a result, leading to more confidence and professional satisfaction. In addition, they felt more empowered, as did other teachers in their schools. However, they also cautioned that there were recurring factors that could inhibit the effectiveness of teachers who take on leadership roles, such as lack of time and poor relationships with administrators.

One of the primary goals of teacher leadership is to impact the teaching practices of others, and often this comes through the use of peer coaching or critical friends (Glickman, 2002). Angelle and Teague (2014) evaluated the perceptions of teacher leaders and those they led, finding that there is a strong relationship between teacher leadership (formal and informal) and collective efficacy, a teacher's belief in the capability of the entire faculty. Surveying 363 teachers in three school districts, they found that the perception of the wider extent of teacher

leadership was positively correlated with greater collective efficacy. In addition, the informal ways in which teachers led, such as sharing responsibility for planning or budgeting, were more effective in increasing collective efficacy than more formal principal-selected roles. Angelle and Teague (2014) consolidate these findings to mean that in order to be successful, teacher leadership efforts must start with a principal's vision for collaboration, dialogue, and shared power.

Characteristics of successful teacher leadership. The literature is conclusive: When done well, teacher leaders can and do improve instruction within their schools (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Grenda & Hackmann, 2014; Muijs & Harris, 2006). The question is how teacher leadership is done well. Cooper, Stanulis, Brondyk, Hamilton, Macaluso, and Meier (2015) found that change efforts are impacted by many different systems, including administrator support, setting, and their own personal orientations towards leadership. In studying eleven teacher leaders in three different schools, Cooper et al. found that teacher leaders who were most successful in implementing change had administrative support and began with a sense of urgency around the problem and a clear vision for change. Wenner and Campbell (2017) found that when teacher leaders do not have the support of their administrators, they are unable to fulfill their duties.

In their study of ten schools known for improving through teacher leadership practices, Muijs and Harris (2006) found several themes emerging as conducive to effective teacher leadership. Once again, administrator support was key, as were shared vision and organizational structures that allowed a large number of teachers to contribute to the decision-making process and learn and problem-solve with each other on a regular basis. Ensuring that time was set aside

for these professional learning communities to meet with each other also helped these schools to achieve desired improvements.

Teaming. One way in which teachers improve their own work, as well as the work of others, is through the use of teams. Often this work occurs through professional learning communities (PLCs) in which "educators collaboratively engage to foster a culture that enhances teaching and learning for all," (Huffman, Olivier, Wang, Chen, Hairon, & Peng, 2016). Examining PLCs in multiple cultures around the world, including Taiwan, Huffman et al. (2016) found that the most effective of these teams have several elements in common: they have organizational structures in place to allow for collaboration, a shared vision is established, and they focus on action that incorporates feedback, collective inquiry, and reflection.

Similarly, middle school philosophy strongly supports the use of interdisciplinary teams, collaborative approaches to decision-making and student-centered learning (Armstrong, 2006). Grenda and Hackmann (2014) examined the distributed leadership practices of three middle schools that had been recognized as exemplars for achievement and found that there is a good deal of overlap between distributed leadership and middle school philosophy. Commonalities in these schools were multiple opportunities for teachers to collaborate and problem-solve with each other in small groups, opportunities for faculty members to be part of the decision-making process, and designated teacher leaders who were experts and advisors in their fields.

Limitations. As Wenner and Campbell (2017) point out, there have been few studies to date that explore the issues of diversity and equity as they relate to teacher leadership and voice. Cultural expectations within schools and classrooms can vary widely, as can the impact of reform initiatives. In addition, many of these studies look at the impact of teacher engagement and leadership on student achievement outcomes as measured by state high-stakes tests, usually

in reading and math. However, schools are beginning to define success and achievement more broadly in order to incorporate capacities such as global competence and teamwork. The impact of teacher voice on other outcomes should also be examined. Finally, the studies discussed primarily involve teachers working with other teachers and administrators in their reform efforts. As there are other constituents within the school and in this study, it is important to examine what gains can be made when teacher leaders interact with these voices as well.

In summary, there is a growing body of evidence that teacher voice and leadership are important parts of successful reform initiatives in schools. When administrators share leadership responsibilities and utilize the expertise of teachers in ways that allow them to collaborate, all teachers within the school are more likely to feel empowered and satisfied in their jobs, which leads to improved functioning in the classroom and improved student outcomes. However, much of the literature does not take into account cultural variability or concern itself with equity and diversity. In addition, the vast majority of studies on teacher voice and leadership are separate from student and parent voice initiatives when in all likelihood, the three constituent groups have shared visions for their schools.

Parent Engagement

Parents are the first and most important teachers in children's lives. However, because they are not part of the daily functioning and structure of classrooms and schools, their roles in the education of their children are less defined. Both culturally and within individual schools, parents and school personnel view their roles very differently. In this section, parent involvement is defined in multiple ways and often varies by culture. In addition, social capital within the school context is economically and culturally-based and provides different avenues for parents supporting their children. Even though teachers and parents often identify involvement

differently, the research on programs that encourage parent engagement and partnership indicate success in improving student outcomes but also in increasing parents' comfort levels and sense of agency within the school and teachers' understanding of their students' individual needs (Sanders & Epstein, 1998).

Definitions. Research abounds in the U.S. on the impact of parental involvement in their children's educational experiences (Epstein, 2008; Ferguson, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Several related terms, often used interchangeably, cover a wide spectrum of levels of involvement. What is important about this section is examining that spectrum of literature to understand what is and what is not applicable to the international school context. Epstein's (2008) model of parent involvement defines six types of parent involvement activities that occur in schools: (1) Parenting and activities that help strengthen parenting skills, (2) Communicating and activities that help families and schools share information with each other, (3) Volunteering and activities that bring parents into the school to support student learning, (4) Learning at home, designed to expand parent/child communication about and extension of classroom activities, (5) Decision-making and activities that bring parental voices into school improvement processes, and (6) Collaborating with the community, supports that help students and families engage with community resources.

Other researchers have taken this model a step further to clarify the difference between involvement and engagement. Buchanan and Buchanan (2017) differentiate between involvement and engagement on the basis of power. While involvement brings parents into the conversation about what is happening at school, involvement does not necessarily mean that parent voices are agents of change to the same degree as other school personnel. Buchanan and Buchanan (2017) define parental engagement as a reciprocal relationship where both parents and

school personnel contribute on the behalf of the child. When schools strive to partner with parents, it is engagement that they are seeking.

Cultural differences. Involvement in children's educational lives looks different in different cultural settings. Using Epstein's six levels of involvement discussed earlier, Huntsinger and Jose (2009) studied the differences between European American parents and immigrant Chinese American parents. In a longitudinal study of 40 Chinese American families and 40 European American families, they found several cultural differences in the ways parents were involved in their elementary-age children's school lives. While both cultural groups were involved in their children's academic lives, the European American parents were more likely to be involved within the school through volunteering activities while the immigrant Chinese American parents were more likely to be involved in learning at home. Chinese American parents were also more likely to believe that their children were not getting enough homework and provide them with extra-curricular academic work to complete at home. The stereotype of the "tiger mother" made popular by Amy Chua's 2011 memoir was met with backlash even within Asian communities due to its harsh tactics, but there is some degree of truth to her assertion that Chinese parents value hard work and academic success very highly (Guey, 2013). Wei (2002) also studied the involvement patterns of Chinese families, surveying the parents of 266 upper elementary school students from a variety of backgrounds in China. He found that as members of a Confucian-heritage culture that see educators and scholars as experts in their fields, Chinese parents tend to see involvement as having high expectations for their children's academic performance and monitoring and helping with homework (Wei, 2002).

Social capital. An important part of research around parental engagement in schools has been conducted through the lens of social capital. Defined by Horvat, Weininger, and LaReau

(2003) as “the material and immaterial resources that individuals and families are able to access through their social ties” (p. 323), social capital in the school setting can be a powerful tool for parents trying to effect change in their children’s schools. Social capital is built through the establishment of relationships with other parents as well as understanding the “rules of the game” within the school.

In their study, Horvat et al. (2003) interviewed and observed 88 families of elementary school students of varying races and social classes. They found that white middle-class parents tend to build their social networks around their children. They are most likely to spend time with and rely on other parents that they meet through their children’s school and activities. On the other hand, working-class and poor families tend to have social networks made up of relatives. As Horvat et al. (2003) show, the parents who have social capital built around school networks tend to be more successful in meeting their needs and wants in the school because they draw on the expertise of other parents and mobilize their networks of other involved parents to handle issues. Poor and working-class parents tend to defer to the authority of school personnel and handle issues on their own.

Discussed earlier, Wei (2002) also examined parental involvement through the lens of social capital. He argues that many immigrant and non-English-speaking families also rely on familial networks, regardless of social class. Therefore, when interpreting the literature about social capital, it is important to keep cultural differences in mind as findings may not be generalizable to groups that did not participate in the study.

Outcomes. Unsurprisingly, many studies have found that students whose parents are involved in their educations do better than those who do not. Henderson and Mapp (2002) reviewed over 50 studies of parental involvement and found that students with involved parents

are more likely to achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, have better social skills and behavior, and have more post-secondary options. In addition, they found that programs specifically targeting parental engagement can be effective in their missions and therefore lead to improved student outcomes as well. However, it must be noted that the majority of these studies were conducted in Western settings, meaning that they may have different implications in other cultures which view parental engagement in different ways.

Bolivar and Chrispeels (2011) studied the impact of programs at two elementary schools designed to increase the social capital of parents through informational training programs. Following 15 Hispanic mothers through the programs, they found that social capital was increased because they helped build trust, informed parents about the norms and expectations for interaction with the school personnel, and helped set up information channels so that parents knew where to turn for different issues. As a result, parents felt more empowered and were better able to effect change on behalf of their children.

How to engage parents. Successful programs that engage parents in their children's education establish partnerships between parents and schools. While there are many schools that do not engage parents, there have been several studies looking at the attributes of successful programs. In Table 1, I share the guidelines set forth in four such studies. The first study by Henderson and Mapp (2002) is a review of 51 studies on the effects of parent involvement, leading to three critical parts: building relationships, recognizing and respecting differences, and establishing a partnership. Due to their simplicity and overarching nature, I use these three components as categories for the directives of the other studies.

The other pieces of literature include a literature review, an empirical study, and a practical piece. Ferguson (2008) completed another review of 61 studies looking for trends in

Table 1

Characteristics of Successful School-Family Partnerships

Henderson & Mapp (2002)	Ferguson (2008)	Francis et al. (2016)	Buchanan & Buchanan (2016)
• Build relationships	• Welcoming Environment • Clear up misconceptions	• Communicate frequently	• Set expectations for teachers to reach out • Build trust • Learn about the child, family, and community
• Recognize and respect differences	• Understand the impact of home culture and context on student performance • Understand the beliefs, knowledge, and skills that impact involvement	• Establish a sense of belonging for all	• Strengths-based perspective
• Establish a partnership	• Structure programs and procedures in ways that encourage involvement • Utilize resources	• Build family leadership • Demonstrate professional competency and commitment	• Encourage reciprocal communication • Acknowledge a shared commitment/goal

what works in family involvement programs. Francis, Blue-Banning, Haines, Turnbull and Gross (2016) conducted focus groups in multiple areas across the US; in total, they received information from 58 parents, including both those with children with disabilities and those with children without disabilities. The final article is a practical piece by Buchanan and Buchanan (2016) setting guidelines for principals in their work with families.

Taken together, the literature is clear that in order to build relationships with parents, schools must develop a welcoming environment (Ferguson, 2008) where parents feel that they belong in the school (Francis et al., 2016). These relationships are reciprocal and built on trust and two-way communication (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2016). However, as explained in the cross-cultural sections of this chapter, the way that parents feel welcome within a school may differ based on cultural norms and expectations. Therefore, it is particularly important that a large part of the communication between parents and school personnel involves seeking to understand the relationship between the home and family context and the student experience at school (Ferguson, 2008) and develop a strengths-based approach that utilizes the assets of each constituent. In addition, schools must help identify and clear up teacher and parent misconceptions about each other's positions (Ferguson, 2008) and utilize a strengths-based approach (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2016) that builds on the collective wisdom, abilities, and experiences of all involved (Ferguson, 2008).

Finally, these relationships must be partnerships with clear expectations and a shared commitment to and responsibility for student success (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2016). In order to be structured effectively, there must be a commitment to family leadership that empowers parents as participants on decision-making teams (Francis et.al., 2016). However, the methods for empowerment may look different in different cultures. As Gu (2008) points out, Asian

families may not feel it is within their rights to be a part of these decision-making teams, and therefore, they may need more support from the school in order to share their perspectives.

Parents are the first and most important teachers in their children's lives, but their roles within the educational arena have been less defined and more limited. Numerous studies of parental involvement show that when parents are engaged in their children's academic lives, the children benefit; but the ways in which parents choose to be involved can vary by culture and social standing. Schools that establish programs that create strategic partnerships with parents where learning and leadership are shared are better able to meet the needs of a diverse population. However, there is very little literature on the ways in which successful parental engagement is achieved within cross-cultural settings.

Student Voice

Student voice is a key focus of this PAR project as we are involving students in the processes that are discussed in Chapter 4, and the literature on student voice is conclusive: when students have authentic voice within the schools, there are benefits for those individuals, their peers, and the school as a whole (Conner, Ebby-Rosin, & Brown, 2015; Mitra, 2008; Yonezawa & Jones, 2009). Students not only have unique perspectives that must be taken into account in order to best meet their needs (Cook-Sather, 2015), their inclusion in decision-making improves their skills, alters teacher perceptions, and improves the school climate (Conner et al., 2015). Cultivating student voice effectively is a difficult undertaking that requires careful planning and strong commitment from school personnel in order to succeed (Sussman, 2015).

Rights of students. While students have traditionally been the beneficiaries of reform efforts rather than participants in those efforts, there are both practical and philosophical reasons for their voices to be involved in the reforms. In their plea for researchers and reformers in

include students in their efforts, Corbett and Wilson (1995) argue that as beneficiaries, students change and are changed in any and all reform efforts, and, therefore, they should be involved as their buy-in will help those change efforts be more successful.

In addition, an often-cited document in student voice literature is the 1987 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by every member country of the United Nations (UN) except the United States of America. Article 12 of this document declares that the views, wishes, and feelings of children should be respected and taken seriously in matters affecting them (UNICEF UK, 2010). Thus, as schooling is a primary focus of the lives of young people, many educational professionals and even whole governments see participation in decision-making as a fundamental right. In his chronicle of the implementation of student voice initiatives in Ireland, Fleming (2015) cites the Welsh policy of requiring student councils aimed at giving students a forum for being heard.

Another fundamental reason for including student voice in reform efforts is that without it, adults will not fully understand the issues they are trying to solve. Youth and children have a unique perspective and can provide insight on how reform efforts are working, or not. Mitra (2008) chronicled a student voice initiative at a suburban California high school where students participated in focus groups to answer the question of why ninth graders were struggling to pass classes. A research group consisting of both students and educators analyzed the answers, finding that the students had information to share that educators had not considered, but also that the student researchers helped to clear up misconceptions that the educators made based on student answers (Mitra, 2008). Taken together, these fundamental tenets of student voice echo Freire's (2000) assertion that in order for those without power to move beyond their

circumstances, they must be part of the dialogue and action. They do this by becoming student-teachers who are "jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (Freire, 2000, p. 80).

Definition and types of student voice. Collectively known as "student voice", there are many different ways in which students have opportunities to share their views and participate in the school decisions that impact their own lives as well as the lives of their peers (Mitra, Serriere, & Kirshner, 2014; Parham & McBroom, 2015; & Yonezawa & Jones, 2009). Some of these initiatives are led by students in their attempts to take action to rectify injustices (activism), others involve participation in school decision-making teams that affect teaching, learning, and school-wide decisions (leadership), and still others are more local, classroom-based strategies of continuous inquiry that promote civic engagement (carpet time democracy) (Mitra et al., 2014).

Parham and McBroom were both students who participated in New York City's successful Student Voice Collaborative where they were part of the Quality Review teams evaluating the effectiveness of schools. In their article chronicling the lessons learned and sharing the student voice rubric that was developed as a result, Parham and McBroom (2015) define student voice as having four tenets: students and teachers listening to each other closely, teachers and administrators acting upon student voices, sharing leadership between all constituents, and leaving students feeling empowered. These tenets comport with the three goals of student voice initiatives established by Conner et al. (2015) as (1) sharing student perspectives on their educational experiences with adults, (2) calling for reform that students feel will better address their learning needs and (3) changing the social construction of students in the school. It is clear that student voice is not simply sharing of student perspectives but must include action and change to the way things are done with rather than for students.

Another way in which students participate in education reform is through their participation in research. Yonezawa and Jones (2009) evaluated the outcomes of a student co-researcher (SCR) project in San Diego, California that gave teachers and students opportunities to collaborate on problems and potential solutions. These students not only provided their opinions on issues, but they also helped to determine which issues to research and conducted that research.

Outcomes of student voice initiatives. As Taines (2014) points out, student involvement in decision-making requires a change in the way educators view power, shifting from a one-directional force that impacts others to a more shared form of relational power that creates partnerships working toward common aims. This process takes deliberate effort, and widespread change cannot occur without buy-in from all, including those who are initially wary of efforts to increase student voice. However, the results of these efforts have been found to impact school communities, including students, teachers, and administrators, in many positive ways: increased student investment, strenthened sense of belonging, and more positive teacher views of students and themselves.

Students who are involved in reform design and implementation are more invested in working to ensure that the efforts are successful. In this way, they are critical to the success or failure of reform efforts (Corbett & Wilson, 1995). In their work with student co-researchers, Yonezawa and Jones (2009) found that student involvement in reform improves the understanding of the problem trying to be solved as students provide a ground-level view of problems that is different than the adult view. Further support for this idea is provided by Osberg, Pope, and Galloway (2006) who studied the impact of student involvement in leadership teams at three schools. They found that when student opinions are taken seriously, students,

teachers, and administrators are all more likely to view the reform efforts favorably. However, the sample size in this study was quite small and its implications should be examined with caution.

Another common finding is that being involved in reform efforts has multiple effects on the students' skills and achievement. Students who participate in reforms are more likely to collaborate with teachers and other students, are more engaged in school, and have a stronger sense of belonging and competence (Conner et al., 2015). As Parham and McBroom (2015) pointed out from their own experiences and research with the Student Voice Collaborative, students who are involved in reform efforts feel respected and strive to do better which leads to changes in the self and spreads to the school and beyond. Collaboration and participation also helped students establish positive relationships with teachers and improved their self-worth and sense of agency (Mitra, 2008).

In addition, having students involved in reform efforts has been shown to positively impact teacher views and practice. As Yonezawa and Jones (2009) found in their study of the impact of student co-researchers, having students at the table during reform discussions "changed the kinds of questions teachers asked themselves and altered the discussions adults had within their schools" (p. 210). In this study, teachers reported seeing issues from a different angle and making changes to their practice as a result. Cook-Sather (2015) also found this to be the case in her study of student/professor partnerships in a university program aimed at teacher reflection on their practice. She found that participation in these partnerships changed teachers' views of student capabilities as well as their own, which leads to critical and intentional reflection on their practice.

Incorporating student voice. In order to achieve these positive outcomes, student voice initiatives must be conducted systematically and authentically as there are many possible pitfalls. If student voice is tokenistic and is only heard rather than acted upon, or only bestowed upon certain vetted students, neither students nor the school as a whole will see a benefit (Fleming, 2015). In addition, student voice that is restricted to "recreational topics" such as planning of extracurricular activities such as dances and pep rallies can also be detrimental (Taines, 2014). Instead, adults initiating student voice initiatives must have a clear vision for partnership with students, communicate openly with teachers, and allow for flexibility of implementation (Mitra, Serriere, & Stoicovy, 2012). At the same time, Conner et al. (2015) caution against accepting student input without question or conversation. To this end, there must be adequate training and support for both students and teachers as they venture across traditional power boundaries.

Sussman (2015) chronicled the implementation of the Student Voice Collaborative in several New York City schools and found that successful reform initiatives began with storytelling and listening to student experiences, but also included educator stories and sharing of expertise. This led to discussions about what needed to change as well as envisioning solutions together and working to get there. Maintaining a clear vision that is frequently returned to and checked against new developments is also a critical piece of successful reform (Mitra et al., 2012).

In particular, the middle school student is at a prime developmental time for cultivating student voice since young adolescence is characterized by a unique set of developmental tasks and needs. Guided by this belief, the National Middle School Association (NMSA) developed a set of characteristics of successful middle schools. These characteristics are undergirded by a belief that students should be educated in ways that are developmentally responsive, challenging,

empowering, and equitable (NMSA, 2010). With this in mind, Doda and Knowles (2008) asked over 2,000 students in the US and Canada what middle school teachers should know about middle school students. The students' responses fell into two overarching categories of needs: quality relationships with teachers and peers and quality learning where they were engaged and able to learn in differentiated ways. Doda and Knowles (2008) also found a subset of students whose answers indicated that they had been part of a more democratic teaching environment where they were empowered to speak. While this study simply asked students to share their opinions, it is clear that students share in the core beliefs of the AMLE and have strong opinions about what works for them. The next step is to incorporate more of their voices into the change processes.

The vast majority of the research on student voice is focused on students in Western schools with Western orientations towards learning. The context of this study is more complicated as it is a Western school in an Eastern setting populated by cross-cultural students. Therefore, while the student voice literature provides key information about the positive outcomes for students and teachers, the recommendations for beginning student voice initiatives by listening is particularly essential. Students in international schools have complex cultural and educational backgrounds that lead to very unique perspectives. Thus, it stands to reason that in order to meet their needs effectively, these perspectives must be taken into account.

Summary

There is a healthy body of literature that advocates for sharing teacher, student, and parent voices and including all constituents in any school decision-making processes. However, the majority of these studies are focused on bringing parents and teachers together or on bringing students and teachers together. There are very few that bring all constituent groups together into

the same action space. In addition, while teachers, students, and parents are all members of the school community with invested interest in the success of students and the school as a whole, there are aspects of both school and home cultures that prevent this from being a more straightforward process. For this reason, schools must take the time to partner *with* constituents in order to understand and unpack the varying views on issues in order to establish common ground and move towards potential solutions that relate to the specific school context. In the next section, I explain the research behind a framework for bringing members of all constituent groups together to discuss issues in ways that honor all participant voices and the specific context in which they work together.

Community Learning Exchanges

As Ice, Thapa, and Cohen (2015) assert, the research on school improvement suggests not only that voices should be heard, but that "engaging all members of the community to be intrinsically motivated co-earners and co-leaders creates the essential foundation for successful school improvement efforts" (p. 10). However, fewer guidelines are available that tell us how to successfully bring all of these constituents together in ways that ensure equity and honor different types of expertise. Many of the studies discussed earlier advocate for school-family partnerships that bring teachers, parents and other community members together but leave students out of the discussion. Conversely, many of the studies advocating for the inclusion of student voice do not include parents in these discussions. It is my belief that all constituent voices are relevant, and, in order to meet the needs of our diverse community effectively, they should all be shared with each other. Similar to the global thinking dispositions of inquiry, understanding, dialogue, and action that Boix Mansilla (2016) suggests lead to global competence, the framework of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) provides both theory

and pedagogical ideas for how to honor the wisdom of people and the power of place in order to improve the knowledge and skills of all in the learning environment.

Axioms

Guajardo et al. (2016) built the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) framework on five axioms. While the authors hold these truths to be axiomatic or self-evident, the core values of each are echoed in other studies and frameworks discussed earlier. The axioms guide the design of any CLE process and offer a way to address differences across age, power dynamics, different cultures, and levels of familiarity.

The first axiom is that learning and leadership are a dynamic social process. This is echoed in the theory of distributed leadership which asserts that leadership does not happen through action but by the interactions occurring between and among leaders and those they lead (Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

The second axiom is that conversations are critical and central pedagogies. In other words, people must communicate with each other in order to learn. Freire's (2000) concept of dialogue rooted in love, humility, and faith supports this axiom as critical conversations must occur in order for change efforts to be successful. In order for improvements to occur, is also important for people with different levels of power to talk with each other about the issues related to their work. As Cook-Sather (2015) discovered in her study of professors and students, these conversations across differences led to positive reflection and change

Another axiom is that the people closest to the issues are best suited to discover answers. In issues within schools, leaders cannot fully understand the issues without the perspectives of all those involved. While this axiom is a central premise of this whole study and has been explored in other sections, it is worth repeating that parents, students, and teachers all have unique

perspectives on education as well as specific assets that can be useful in addressing issues. Sussman's (2015) work with the Student Voice Collaborative, Supovitz, Sirinides, and May's (2010) findings that peer influence has a higher direct association with change than administrator influence, and Francis et al.'s (2016) study on building family-school partnerships all support this axiom.

Another critical axiom of the CLE process is that crossing boundaries enriches how we learn and develop. In order to achieve new results, we must try new things and get out of "comfort zones". Bolivar and Chrispeels (2011) found support for this axiom in their study of programs aimed at increasing the social and intellectual capital of parents from disadvantaged groups. By increasing these parents' understanding of an unfamiliar system and encouraging increased conversations with others, they found that the parents were able to increase social capital as well as efficacy in supporting their children's educations. In addition, several studies looked at how intercultural sensitivity and competence are developed because these proficiencies are associated with better social outcomes, specifically in the ability to adapt to different situations. Taylor (2014) in particular found that increased exposure to "the other" through shared activities and discussions heightened intercultural sensitivity.

The final axiom is that hope and change are built on assets and dreams of locals and their communities. While national mandates may come and go, the ability and will to change lie in the hands and hearts of those closest to the schools. As Ferguson (2008) found in a review of the literature, when schools and families have a mutual understanding of each other's assets and beliefs and partner together for change, the students are more successful.

Theory of Change: RASPPA

Guajardo et al. (2016) have developed a theory of change that involves the building of trusting relationships, recognizes setting and assets, and focuses on action. They have given this theory the acronym RASPPA, and each element is documented below. The first, foundational aspect of the CLE process is building *relationships*. There is a multitude of evidence that without trusting relationships, constituents cannot fully invest and involve themselves in taking the risks necessary for change. Discussed earlier, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that schools must build trusting, collaborative relationships with families in order to improve student achievement. In addition, Supovitz et al. (2010) found that leaders who establish trusting relationships with teachers have greater impacts on student learning, and Yonezawa and Jones (2009) found that trusting relationships between teachers and students allowed for honest dialogue and subsequent changes to pedagogies. Relational trust is foundational to any school reform effort (Bryk et al., 2015; Grubb, 2009).

As part of building trusting relationships, there must be a focus on *assets.* As several researchers have pointed out, deficit thinking is the rule rather than the exception in many schools, which is detrimental to students and the school in general. However, in addition to many different perspectives, there are many assets that administrators, student, teachers, and parents bring to the table when discussing reform. As Spillane, et al. (2001) assert, effective leaders make use of the expertise and wisdom of others rather than relying on themselves.

One way that participants build relationships and discover the assets of themselves and others is through the use of *stories.* Stories help others understand the storyteller's perspective, but they also help the storyteller to reflect and discover origins and meanings for themselves (Guajardo, Oliver, Rodriguez, Valadez, Cantu, & Guajardo, 2011). The use of stories was also

one of Ari Sussman's (2015) top lessons learned through the Student Voice Collaborative. Students kept journals of their experiences, which helped them to better understand their own perspectives but also to explain those perspectives and cross borders in conversations with other constituents.

Place is a term used for both the physical place and the culture of the community. Understanding the values and history of the community will better inform the work of the CLE. This mirrors the recommendations to respect and recognize differences and unique characteristics of communities provided by Henderson and Mapp (2002). Gleaned from their review of the literature surrounding school and family partnerships, they were clear that schools cannot improve without understanding the needs of their communities and subsequently working to meet those unique needs.

Politic is the term used to describe actions that work to improve the self, school, and community. Parham and McBroom (2015), the two students who wrote about their experiences in the Student Voice Collaborative, described the changes in their schools as happening in a similar order: self, school, system. The implication is that the wider system cannot change without a wave of changes to individuals. Then those individuals work to improve their surroundings and then the greater system in which they operate.

The last part of the change theory is *action* because it is not enough for people to understand the system producing current results. Their understanding must inspire them to act, which is a process all on its own. The Student Voice Collaborative launch and orbit cycles described by Sussman (2015) illustrated how a group of constituents can develop a plan of action, monitor it, and then come back together to revise the plan to ensure that it has maximum impact.

The components explained above do not occur in a linear step-by-step fashion. Some happen simultaneously and are revisited at different parts of the CLE process. While action is the final component and should likely come after participants have developed relationships and a mutual understanding of the issues, it should not be viewed as the end. Instead, the group should spiral back to other parts of the process in order to evaluate the actions and plan new ones.

Emerging Framework

This study is aimed at better serving all members of a diverse school population with the theory that this is best accomplished by bringing more voices into the decision-making process. In order to do so, the school needs to take cultural backgrounds and positionality within the school into account, but international schools in Asia are in the unique situation of straddling both Eastern and Western cultures that lead to many different combinations and variations within students and families. As illustrated by Figure 9, the way we incorporate multiple and often differing perspectives into the decision-making process is through inquiry and dialogue utilizing CLE pedagogies that mirror global thinking dispositions and lead to authentic partnerships that collaborate towards achieving a common goal and ultimately do a better job of meeting the needs of a diverse population.

Chapter Summary

Overall, this review of the literature has uncovered several key points. First and foremost, positionality within the school community and cultural background both impact a person's conceptions and expectations of teaching, learning and schooling (Cook-Sather, 2015; Corbett & Wilson, 1995; Ferguson, 2008; Li, 2012). However, cultural background is more complicated in international schools than national schools because all involved in international school are

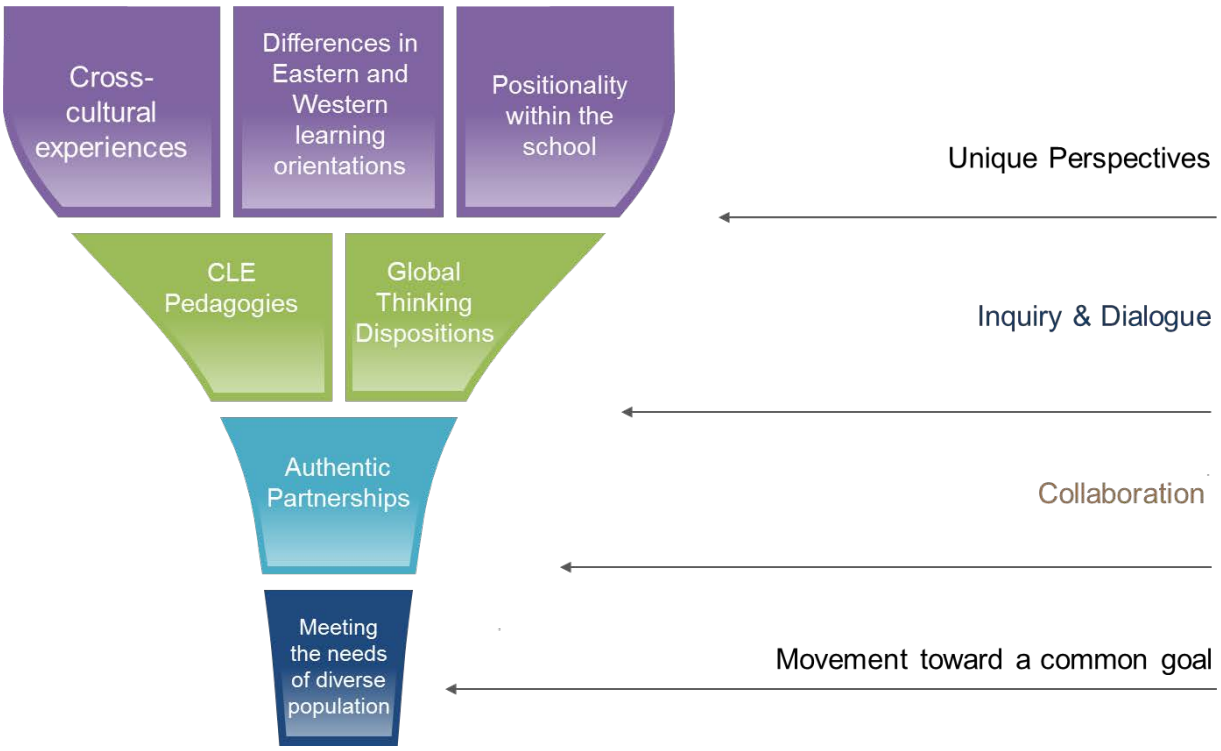

Figure 9. Emerging framework.

experiencing multiple cultures on a regular basis and in deeply personal ways. These multicultural experiences may require individuals to grapple with conflicting ideas and worldviews in order to develop their own unique identities, but they also often lead to greater adaptability and perspective-taking ability, both of which are involved in global competence, a skill required for the next generation (Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2016; Pollack & Van Reken, 2009).

At the same time, the literature is clear that collaboration between and among those in different positions in the school community benefits all in a myriad of ways. Teachers benefit from collaboration with each other (Grenda & Hackmann, 2014), school-family partnerships improve teacher understanding of students, parental efficacy, and student engagement and outcomes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002), and authentic student voice initiatives increase students' leadership skills while also improving student-teacher relationships and teachers' understanding of student perspectives (Mitra, 2008). However, these collaborations must be authentic rather than tokenistic, and they must occur in culturally appropriate ways.

Several models for engagement and cultural sensitivity have emerged during this literature review, and they have many commonalities. In particular, the global thinking dispositions suggested by Boix Mansilla (2016) to help students develop global competence are quite similar to the tips for school-family partnerships suggested by Henderson and Mapp (2002) as both involve building relationships through dialogue aimed at understanding and respecting differences and then partnering for action. However, the RASPAA theory of change espoused by Guajardo et al. (2016), and the CLE methodology that has developed as a result, take these models a step farther by not only honoring the wisdom of people but also paying particular attention to the power of place, the action space in which these diverse individuals are coming

together to work towards building a common language and then achieving a common goal. As this participatory action research project is geared towards increasing equitable voice within a specific diverse context, the CLE methodology, as well as its specific pedagogies, is best suited to use within this project and therefore is the methodology I have chosen going forward.

While there is a great deal of research into bringing parents into decision-making processes with school personnel and into bringing student voices into the equation, there is far less literature bringing all of these voices together at the same time. In addition, many of these studies call for schools to take culture into account when bringing parent and student voices into school decision-making processes, but few studies examined the impact of culture on those efforts. Even more so, there has been no research on the impact of bringing co-practitioners into both the planning of partnership efforts and the research itself. This study incorporates all of these elements and, by answering the research questions below, will add to the collective knowledge base on issues of equity and diversity.

Through the implementation of CLEs, to what extent do we increase equitable voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process at the school, thereby better serving a culturally diverse student and family population?

The participatory action research sub-questions include:

1. To what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants?
2. How do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling?
3. To what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers?

4. How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?

The next chapter explores the context of this project in greater detail, including the people and aspects of place that combine into a need for equity of voice and sharing of diverse perspectives. In the following chapter on research design, I explain the methods in which I implemented CLEs with my co-research practitioner partners as well as the data we collected and analyzed to determine the extent to which we increased equity of voice.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT

Introduction

The underlying premise for this participatory action research (PAR) project is that in order to make the best decisions for our school population, we must first understand all voices and their culturally-influenced perspectives. As explored in Chapter 2, international school students experience multiple cultures, sometimes on a daily basis, and the merging of these cultures into one unique cultural identity influences his or her perspectives on education and schooling among other things. Therefore, it is vitally important to understand the unique and diverse cultural context where this project takes place. This chapter attempts to give the reader a broad overview of the structure and demographics of Taiwan, the school, and all constituent groups.

Place

The setting for this PAR project is an international school located in Taipei, Taiwan, a city of 2.7 million people. Taipei is a relatively safe and clean city known for its food culture. Most families live in apartments rather than houses, and many live multi-generationally.

Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China (ROC), is a democratic republic with a complicated relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Taiwan's relationship with China also dictates its diplomatic relationships with other countries around the world. The national language is Mandarin Chinese, but Taiwanese and several aboriginal dialects are also spoken. English is taught in schools and many people speak it to some degree. As Taiwan was under Japanese rule during the early 20th century, many elderly people also speak Japanese, and schools and infrastructure still show signs of Japanese influence.

The school is located in the northern neighborhood of Tienmu where English is more widely spoken than in other areas of the city. The school serves around 2400 students KA-12 and is known for its rigorous curriculum and rate of acceptance into prestigious colleges and universities in the United States. Students at the school must hold a foreign passport, but many students hold dual citizenship with Taiwan or have familial ties to the area.

The school was founded in 1949 and could be classified as a "type A – traditional" school as it catered primarily to overseas US missionary and military families (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). While the U.S. military has not been active in Taiwan since de-recognition in 1979, the school has maintained its American influence and strives to educate students with an American-based curriculum. Students whose parents hold American passports have top priority in admission to the school, but more often than in years past, these are families who have familial ties to Taiwan. In addition, as Hayden and Thompson (2013) note, the dominance of English as an international language of business has led to an increasing global desire for English-medium schooling, and Taiwan is no exception. There is an English proficiency requirement in order to gain admission, but the school seeks to provide equitable access to the curriculum through its support programs. English as an Academic Language (EAL) support is available to students through grade 8. Learning and speech-language support services are also available KA-12 to students with mild learning differences.

Because the majority of the parent population speak a language other than English as their first language, all publications are printed in both Mandarin and English, and Mandarin, Korean, and Japanese translators are available for individual parent meetings. Currently, the school is also exploring a system for simultaneous translation during large group parent meetings

in order to increase equitable access to the content delivered and its relationship to the school mission.

This PAR project is based primarily in the middle school, where there are about 600 students in grades 6 through 8. Described by the visiting ECU coaches as "serious but kind," the atmosphere of the middle school is active and engaged. Students and teachers work hard but also enjoy their time at the school. The walls are covered in student work and posters promoting the five core values of the school, and the classrooms are outfitted with a plethora of technological tools. Students all have laptops, and digital literacy is embedded in the curriculum. Students have access to a well-resourced library as well as state-of-the-art robotics labs and athletic facilities. In addition, pastoral care is a primary focus of the middle school philosophy. Students are placed on interdisciplinary teams of teachers who regularly meet to plan and discuss students. In addition, each student begins the day in a small homeroom with one teacher whose task is to build a relationship with him or her and deliver content related to character and well-being. These relationships are fostered from the first day of school, but they are solidified during the "Camp Taiwan" week that takes place in September. During this week, each grade level travels to a different location in Taiwan to engage in outdoor exploration and teambuilding activities. There are also multiple opportunities for students to interact with faculty and each other throughout the school year.

History

Most students' goals for the future involve college in the US, both in this school and in many international schools around the world. Therefore, while the setting for this project is a private school located in Asia rather than America, we have an American-based curriculum and many of the teachers were educated there. Thus, the foundational beliefs about education are

rooted in and informed by American schooling traditions and reform efforts. While none have been entirely successful, throughout American educational history, there have been many efforts to increase the equity of voices in school decision-making as well as to better serve culturally diverse populations.

The idea that school community members, namely parents, should be involved in the schools is not new in the US. In the early 1900s, Ella Flagg Young became superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools and began to encourage parents to visit classrooms (Goldstein, 2014). While this may not have led directly to parental input in decisions, it did have political and philosophical implications as parents became more informed about the education their children were receiving.

In larger part, the community control movement in the late 1960s furthered the concept that parents and community members should be involved in the decision-making and reform process in schools. This was a philosophical shift, and though it was politically controversial as it quickly became racially charged, those involved noted that its primary focus was on helping students (Goldstein, 2014).

In addition to trying to increase the number of voices in the decision-making process, many members of the community control movement were also drawn to the idea that a more culturally relevant curriculum would improve student learning in largely African American schools (Berube, 1994). While an Afrocentric curriculum was not widely adopted in part due to fears of political ideation being taught in schools, the increased calls for global competence as an essential capacity in international schools leads me to the conclusion that culturally relevant curriculum is desirable in this context. There is no single culture that is relevant for a given international school student body, but as described in Chapter 2, the global perspectives domain

of the International Counseling model calls for students to develop an understanding of both their home and host cultures (Fezler & Brown, 2011). In addition, global competence includes adapting to different cultural perspectives and understanding intercultural issues (OECD, 2016).

Around the same time as the community schools movement, the Cardozo Project in Urban Teaching Washington DC and the National Teacher Corps that grew out of it also experimented with increasing the interactions between teachers and their constituents. Intern teachers in the project worked with master teachers within the school, but they were also required to live in the neighborhood and do community service, thus expanding their understanding of the community they served and vice versa (Daly, 1975). By becoming part of the community, they shared experiences and stories with parents, students, and community members, thus increasing equity of voice.

Similarly, Charlotte, NC integrated their schools in the early 1970s by pairing two racially different schools and bussing students to one for the first half of elementary school and the other for the second half of elementary. While this increased the diversity within the classroom, economically impacted the equity of spending on all schools and made access to curriculum more equitable, they also held workshops for black and white teachers to learn from each other, which helped to increase their trust in each other as well as their understanding of their students. Integrated schools where students are exposed to greater variations in cultures and backgrounds have been shown to benefit academically as well as socially and psychologically. Smith (2016) noted that students in integrated schools are more likely to improve their academic scores while also exhibiting greater levels of intercultural friendships and lower rates of racial fears and stereotypes. Unfortunately, when the cross-town bussing that made this integration possible was struck down in a 1999 court decision, these gains quickly disappeared from many

of Charlotte's schools. While there is no explicit evidence that equitable voices were part of the school-wide or district-wide decision-making processes, these benefits point to the development of capacities that may lead to global competence.

There have been several efforts to increase equity of voice during American history, particularly during the civil rights movement. While none have been entirely successful, they serve as the foundation for the work that we continue to do in our schools. At my school, we have adapted some of the underlying philosophies of these attempts to increase understanding of one's culture as well as the cultures of the people around them.

When new teachers enter the school, there is quite an extensive orientation process that has grown to include an orientation to the Mandarin language, Taiwan, and the school itself. In addition, there is no teacher housing complex as is the case in many international schools. Instead, teachers find their own housing within the neighborhood, meaning that they live among the locals and their students. It is common for teachers to see students at dinner with their families in the evenings or playing sports on the school fields on the weekends. In addition, there are social engagements built into the school calendar that bring faculty and parents together. These engagements are intended to provide opportunities for parents and faculty to get to know each other outside of their roles regarding the specific student(s) they share and instead allow them to discuss overarching thoughts on the school's vision and possibly even their own non-school lives. These opportunities provide faculty with insight into students' cultures and parental perspectives while doing the same for parents, which may in turn allow the school to better serve the population.

The school has eight named "essential capacities" that it sees as necessary skills for students to be successful in the future, including adaptability, digital literacy, and teamwork.

Global perspective is one of these capacities, and to this end, there are activities to celebrate the cultural diversity of the school as well as a curricular inclusion of projects and classes that teach specific Asian history and Taiwanese traditions and customs. In addition, there are a few clubs and other leadership opportunities where students learn about Taiwanese culture and/or the cultures of others. For example, Model United Nations (MUN) is a popular club in the middle school that has partially grown out of the desire for students to increase their cultural competency. In MUN, students take on the role of a United Nations (UN) delegate, research the country's stances on various global issues, and debate resolutions as that country's delegate.

These attempts to increase the cultural understanding of faculty and students are a good start to increasing cultural awareness, but there is still work to be done in the area of cross-cultural understanding as well as increasing equity of voice across different constituent groups.

Evidence of FoP

The focus of practice evolved as I discussed it with multiple constituents, examined the make-up of the school, and conducted a pilot CLE. As part of an initial Research Learning Exchange, I spoke with many faculty members, administrators, parents, and students about the topic of cultural identity and how it impacts the students at the school. I was initially interested in how cultural identity is formed in international students who experience multiple cultures on a regular basis. However, the conversations with constituents highlighted how the differences between an American education and a multicultural upbringing affect the success of the educational systems and initiatives we put in place, and I realized that this may be a root cause of some other issues we are facing. As I delved deeper into the general composition of the school and its constituents, I realized the differences in the composition of faculty and the families that attend the school. After discussing these lessons with my ECU coaches as well as administrators

within the school, I facilitated a pilot CLE with the help of the ECU coaches. Together, these activities have informed my focus of practice and influenced the design of this research.

Research Learning Exchange

In the fall of 2016, I spoke with several students, parents, teachers, and administrators about their cross-cultural experiences. Similar themes surfaced in the conversations with all constituents, but their perspectives, in general, differed based on their constituent group. Parents were more concerned with broader implications of the cultural differences while teachers tended to focus on their experiences with students in the classroom. Students, on the other hand, noticed differences on both macro and micro levels.

Conversations with faculty highlighted the differences in local and expat students based on Western measures of student engagement. For example, many mentioned that expat students tend to be more outspoken and questioning within the classroom while local students tend to be more reserved and obedient. However, two colleagues in particular, both adult third culture kids (ATCKs) who work with students as they exit high school, pointed out the fact that teachers and administrators sometimes do not understand the background of the students who they teach. Any given middle or upper teacher has 60-80 students who are new to them each year, and most of the students "look like" they come from the same place. This fact coupled with the idea that getting through content is much more important than getting to know students to a deep level can make it harder for teachers to understand the "code-switching" that many students do as they move from home to school. For example, many traditional Asian families operate with the idea that elders are the knowledge givers, and local schools in Taiwan are largely organized around banking education methods (Freire, 2000). This means that children who are most successful are the ones who soak up the most information from their teachers and use it correctly when called

upon. In contrast, the ideals of the American educational system, which the school strives to emulate, prize critical thinking, original thought, and learning from mistakes. Teachers in the school report that more often, students who come from local schools are quiet in the classroom, and the students report that this is due to not wanting to say something incorrectly in English, but also not having had the practice speaking up. Therefore, the most successful cross-cultural individuals (CCIs) are those able to switch systems on a regular basis, from being seen to being heard and from accepting what they are told implicitly to questioning their elders and being open to failure.

Some parents, on the other hand, were more aware of the broader implications of moving between cultures and expressed concern for the cultural identity development of their children. Many parents, especially those living in multicultural homes, expressed that their children experience some level of confusion and rootlessness as they transition from one place or environment to the next. Several parents noted that within their own families, their children answered the question "where are you from?" differently. Before and during the Research Learning Exchange, I spoke with students who struggled to determine their own value systems in relation to the contradictory home and school systems. They did not explicitly name this concern as one of cultural identity development, but it was clearly one and the same.

My conversations with parents and students also highlighted differences between cultural groups on many different levels including social networks, afterschool use of time and expected routines for parent involvement at school. A common theme in my discussions with parents and students was that major differences between cultures cause divisions between local students and families and the expat population. Within-group differences abound, but, in general, they reported that expat families, who are often more transient, tend to enter the school looking for

friends and connections, and the whole family social circle tends to revolve around school ties. In contrast, families with ties locally tend to rely on extended family social networks and their responsibilities to those networks, meaning they are less interested in bonding with new families. In addition, the afterschool use of time is vastly different for these two groups. Families with local ties tend to set up structured classes and activities for their children while families who have lived in other countries tend to prefer unstructured and playtime for their children. The lack of close social connections between people in different cultural groups also leads to misunderstandings when interacting with each other.

Many groups also reported that parental expectations, of their children and of the school, vary by culture. More Asian families tend to have high expectations for grades and define success in those terms. They choose an American school because their ultimate goal is for their children to go to an American university. On the other hand, Western families tend to have fewer options when choosing a school in Taiwan but choose this school due to its resources and curricular and extra-curricular opportunities available for their children now.

Furthermore, the parents reported that parental involvement in the school also differs by culture. Parents who have experience with more Western traditions of involvement in the school (e.g., Parent Teacher Association, room parents, conferences, etc.) are more comfortable in the school. This level of comfort gives them more access to teachers and administrators, meaning that their concerns and points of view are heard more often. Local families who have more experience with Asian educational traditions, where educators are revered and seen as experts and parents only come to school when something bad happens, are less comfortable talking with school personnel and, therefore, their perspectives are less known or understood.

Figure 1 in Chapter 1 illustrates the themes that emerged through my analysis of my focus of practice and my conversations with various constituents during the research learning exchange. There are several factors that influence how well the school meets the needs of its diverse population as well as the equity of voice within and among constituent groups in the school. The variations in cultural backgrounds impact the experiences of and interactions among parents, students, and faculty within the school. In addition, the established practices for decision-making are not currently organized to systematically take multiple perspectives into account in equitable ways.

After speaking with parents, students, faculty, and administrators, it became even more evident to me that cultural differences impact the experiences of constituents as well as the success of our change initiatives. As I began this project, the middle school had a new principal who was interested in changing the way time is structured, and he wanted to hear from constituents about their perspectives. However, in order to achieve this goal, we needed a way to hear from them more equitably.

Equity Inventory

Prior to choosing CLEs as the methodology for my PAR project, I completed an equity inventory as part of my doctoral coursework. Described in more detail in the "people" section of this chapter, the details of this inventory were unsurprising on some levels but enlightening in other ways as I was able to quantify the number of students who have attended certain types of schools and which students and parents are citizens of which countries. As a counselor, often I am aware of students' and parents' cultural and educational backgrounds. However, through this equity inventory, I was able to compare the vast array of educational experiences and cultural backgrounds our students and parents bring to the school to the narrow set of backgrounds of

teachers and even narrower backgrounds of administrators. I came away with the conclusion that international school teachers and administrators likely have fewer shared experiences with their students and the students' parents than educators in local or national schools. However, at the same time, I was struck by how limited the information I was using actually was. Demographic data such as passport country and previous school do not provide adequate insight into the multitude of cultural experiences that come with international moves and attending international schools. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that the school work more explicitly on understanding what skills and orientations students and parents bring to this school, and this information cannot be obtained using forms and checkboxes. We must speak with them and hear their stories to truly understand.

Pilot CLE

In the spring of 2017, I worked with the administrative team to set up a pilot CLE on the topic of homework. My intent was both to hone my skills in conducting a CLE and to verify that my perception of my focus of practice aligned with the reality experienced by the participants. Together, my co-counselor and I invited a diverse set of teachers coming from varied educational backgrounds as well as different roles within the school to participate in the pilot CLE. I then asked each teacher to submit the names of several students and parents that they felt might be willing to be a part of the pilot CLE. My co-counselor and I then approached and invited students and parents from this list, making sure to include a diverse selection of each constituent group so that different cultural backgrounds, length of stay at the school, and parent educational backgrounds were represented.

The CLE agenda (see Appendix C) was set collaboratively with my co-counselor and doctoral coaches who helped facilitate the CLE. We utilized the pedagogies of circles and a

gallery walk as well as small-group discussions within constituent groups and among members of varying constituent groups. During this CLE discussions on homework, several themes emerged across constituent groups, including a consensus that there is too much homework and a desire for other learning activities to be taken into account. The administrators were unsurprised by these findings and committed to using these data as they worked to adjust the homework expectations in the middle school.

After conducting the CLE, I elicited feedback from all participants, and several themes emerged. Many reported feeling honored to be a part of this work, and all reported that it was a positive experience for them. Several also reported that through the discussions, both with members of their own constituent groups and with members of other constituent groups, they viewed the issue through a new lens and were exposed to perspectives they previously had not considered.

In my own reflection on the pilot CLE, I was struck by the positive energy and commitment that I felt within the room. I was particularly moved by the power of the circle and its ability to encourage all participants to speak. At times, the more vocal adults in the room dominated conversations, but as facilitators, we were able to bring the quieter voices into the conversation by acknowledging this fact and encouraging their participation. I felt that these types of discussions helped increase the understanding of participants and therefore are necessary to get the "buy-in" that administrators are seeking from constituents. It also was clear to me that I need to include teachers, students, and parents on the CPR team planning the CLEs. In order to be successful, we must not only include representatives from all constituent groups in the CLEs themselves, but they must be part of the team working to make them successful. In addition, participants' feedback noted, and I agree, that the next CLEs will need more time and more

voices in order for us to delve more deeply into the topics. Having more time would allow us to utilize more of the pedagogies that engage participants with each other and deepen understanding of the topic, and a larger group of participants would increase the representation of constituent voices in the room.

Political Environment

The political environment of Taiwan, while complicated, is relatively stable as a democratic country with an elected president. There are two main political parties in the country who organize themselves around their views on Taiwan's relationship with China. One party is pro-independence while the other maintains that Taiwan is or should be part of the mainland. The school does not take a side on this issue, but many families have leanings on one side or the other of this issue. There are also several parents or grandparents who are active within the government. For the most part, students and families do not talk about politics at school and because even most pro-independence adults tend to believe that now is not the time to anger China by declaring independence, there is some consensus in the desire to keep the status quo. However, while political beliefs do not impact day-to-day interactions and operations in overt ways these beliefs are part of many students' and parents' cultural identities, and certain practices are undertaken to limit the possible conflicts. For example, the school has chosen to join an athletic conference that does not include schools from China in order to limit the exchange of students in both directions. In addition, students who are from China have reported feeling that being from the mainland has limited their friendship opportunities within the school, and students who are neither Taiwanese nor Chinese have reported being cautioned by other students when attempting to speak about politics.

The political environment within the school is similarly stable. Decisions are made within a system that is hierarchical, but there are feedback loops. In many ways, the school is governed like a business with a top executive (Head of School) who leads the school in its mission and a Board of Directors in place to ensure fiscal responsibility and adherence to the vision. As depicted in Figure 10, students, teachers, parents, and administrators all have avenues through which they can give feedback on decisions and policies, but the final decision-making power rests with the Head of School who needs the approval of the Board. There are thirteen current and former parents on the board, nine of whom are elected by the PTA. The remaining four are appointed by the elected members. Together, the group is responsible for overseeing the school and ensuring that it is meeting the stated vision.

There are also external forces that impact the system, namely the accreditation agency and AP/IB curricula that govern certain upper school courses, but as the school is actually a non-profit organization that needs consumers (parents) to buy its product (American-style education), parent and student input is often welcome and impactful through both formal and informal venues. Parent and student satisfaction surveys are conducted annually, and administrators and counselors often meet with parents and students to discuss both their individual needs and opinions on programmatic decisions. When reforms are being discussed, there are often calls for parent, student, and teacher input through the use of focus groups. However, these groups often meet in isolation from one another with an administrator gathering information from a group of parents followed by a separate group of teachers followed by another group of students. For example, during the writing of the most recent strategic plan, there were several school-wide and division-specific faculty meetings as well as a few parent focus groups to discuss and provide feedback on the draft plan authored by administrators and board members. I am not aware of

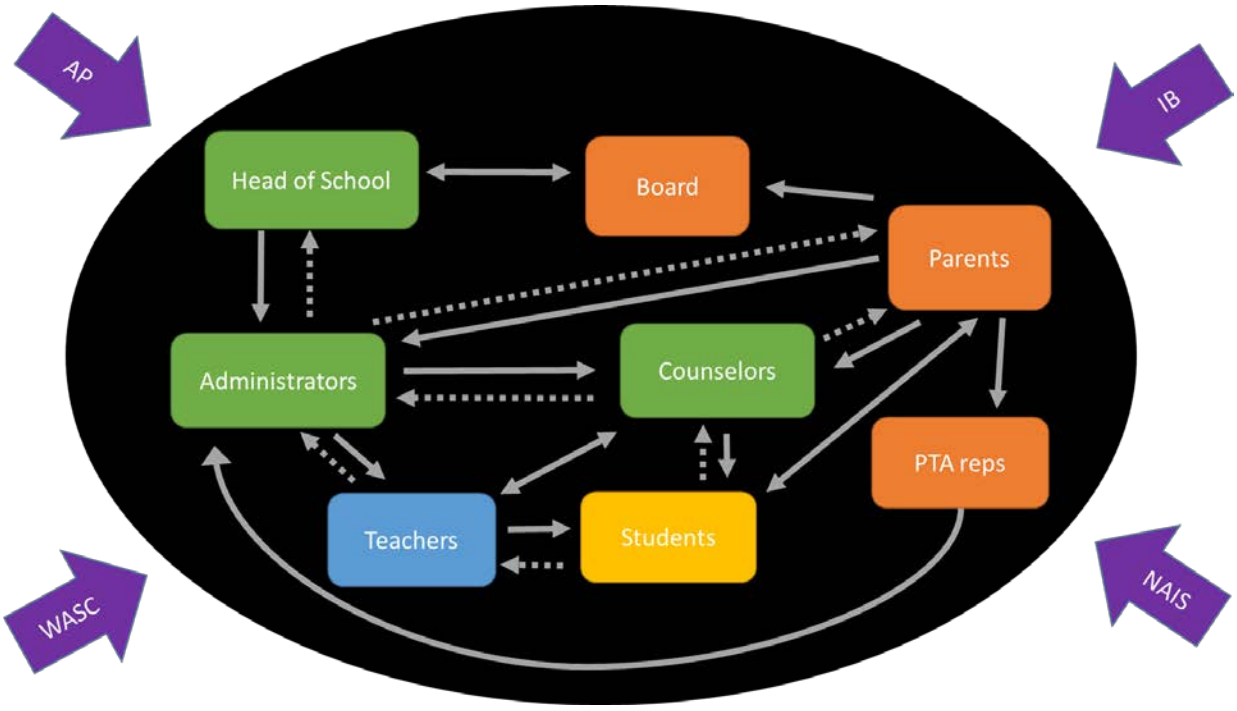

Figure 10. School political system.

student groups providing feedback. However, due to both time constraints and administrator and/or school board preferences, time was not spent discussing the topic in groups of mixed constituents and co-authoring the site-specific narrative on areas for improvement.

Within individual classrooms in the middle school, there are certain checks and balances because teachers of the same course are expected to teach the same material, give the same assessments, and assign the same homework. Therefore, on a regular basis and more often than in other divisions, middle school teachers spend time discussing the content standards and benchmarks that have been approved by the school and tweaking their pedagogical practices to meet these standards. Teachers have some input into the content standards and benchmarks during curriculum reviews that happen every five years or so, but the majority of their control lies within the realm of how they and their teaching partners teach and assess a given topic. Students have a modest amount of choice in that they are able to make some selections of the electives they take, but within the classroom, it is the rare project that allows students to determine their method for demonstrating knowledge.

People

A major asset of the school and this PAR project is the people. The vast majority of all constituents are committed to the school's vision and work to make it a positive atmosphere on a daily basis. However, within and between groups, there are certain cultural divides that impact the dialogue between and among constituents. In this section, I detail the demographic and cultural characteristics as well as the general school experiences of the four major groups of people who are part of the school and this participatory action research project: students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Described more fully in Chapter 4, I also introduce the members of the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team who helped conduct this research.

Students

Students within the middle school range in age from 11 to 15 and hold citizenship from over 25 countries around the world. A large percentage of students, over 20%, has been at the school since kindergarten, and an even larger percentage (46%) attended another school in Taiwan prior to entering this school (33% attended a local school and 13% attended another international school). These students, often referred to as "stayers," tend to remain at the school until graduation, and many have familial ties to Taiwan through at least one parent. In addition, while students must hold a foreign passport in order to gain acceptance and this is how demographic data is tracked within the school, many of these students and parents also hold Taiwanese citizenship.

A second group of students and families, often referred to as "leavers," accounts for roughly one-third of the student population. These students arrived at the school from international or local schools in other countries. Most often, these students are in Taiwan as a result of a parent's job, and they usually stay no more than three or four years before moving to another location. However, there is also a sub-group who have familial ties to Taiwan but have been living overseas and are now returning "home."

As described above, the students in the school all hold foreign citizenship, but many have familial ties to Taiwan and have Taiwanese passports as well. Still other students describe themselves as coming from interracial or intercultural households, and some have never lived in their passport countries. Therefore while passports are the only demographic data tracked by the school, they only provide a small fraction of information about a student's cultural background. For example, one student, Marie, is ethnically Taiwanese but was born in Brazil and has a Brazilian passport. She lived in Paraguay and attended a Spanish language school until she and

her mother moved to Taiwan last year to be with her father and brothers. She speaks four languages, but she also loves to sing and play guitar, works hard at school, and is a phenomenal soccer player.

Students' orientations towards school life are clearly influenced by both home and school cultures and backgrounds, but overall the student culture is very driven towards improvement and success. The students are broadly described by parents and teachers as being very busy and motivated to achieve academic success, and there is growing interest in athletic achievement. To this end, a portion of students participate in after-school tutoring and structured athletic coaching in addition to the wide variety of extra-curricular activities at school. In addition, students regularly complete upwards of two hours of homework each night. It is not unusual for students to have different types of activities every day after school. Marie has a singing lesson, a guitar lesson, and a tennis lesson in addition to the two school soccer practices she attends each week.

Disciplinary action is rare, and teachers report little need for behavior management in the classes which range in size from 12 to 30 students. It is unclear whether this is due in larger part to teaching styles, to students who crave learning, or to students who have been raised or educated in Eastern traditions that value teachers as moral leaders, but it stands to reason that all impact student and teacher experiences within the school. For this reason, there is a good deal of trust between students and faculty. This is one of the few middle schools that allows students to have a free study period built into their schedules. During this time, students can be seen meeting with teachers, studying in bean bag chairs in the library, playing basketball in the gym, or chatting with friends over a snack in the cafeteria. As the school promoted cognitive, social, and physical well-being, a personal sense of responsibility and self-care are facilitated throughout middle school.

Beyond some degree of ability to structure their own time, students have limited ability to make decisions about their school experiences. While they have some choice in elective classes they take and activities they join, they rarely have the ability to influence school-wide decisions. Sometimes students come to the counselors to relay concerns about workload and stress, but they rarely go straight to administrators. Occasionally they also talk with their teachers to advocate for change, but it is usually to ask for an extension due to an extenuating circumstance. There are a few student leadership groups. Student council is the largest, and they lead assemblies, food drives, and sponsor dances for students. Student Wellness Action Teams (SWAT) are organized for each grade level and are intended to keep the pulse of the school and lead initiatives to address issues they see. Past initiatives have addressed swearing in the hallways, taking responsibility for messes in the cafeteria, general kindness, and grade level cohesion, and students have addressed these issues in a myriad of ways: posters, videos, and leading by example.

Students with more exposure to Western mindsets, through parental acculturation and/or schooling, are more likely to join leadership teams and speak out on their own behalf. Students who arrive from more local schools are less likely to take on leadership roles, but it is unclear to what degree this is related to English proficiency, cultural ideals or more likely, a combination of the two.

Parents

As with the students, there is a great deal of variation in parental cultural make-up. However, unlike students, parents may hold only a Taiwanese passport. Therefore, there are more parents who have lived in Taiwan and attended Taiwanese schools than any other group. There are similar “leaver” and “stayer” divides within the parent population as many families

with local ties tend to live intergenerationally and have familial obligations whereas “leaver” families tend to socialize with each other. This divide was noted multiple times during my Research Learning Exchange conversations with parents. For example, parents noted that during new family activities, local parents tend to be looking for the people they have known forever while the new expat families are looking to make new friends. In addition, the parents noticed differences in orientation towards parental involvement in their children’s educations and whether that happens within the school or outside of it.

The parents are involved in school activities to varying degrees. Nearly all parents come to the parent-teacher conferences and back-to-school-nights that happen each year. For some parents, this is the only time they speak to their children’s teachers. However, this does not mean that they are not involved in their children’s educations. Many of these parents, particularly the mothers, fit Chua’s (2011) description of “tiger mothers,” structuring their children’s schedules and monitoring homework and practice on a nightly basis. Some parents also attend workshops and parent coffee mornings sponsored by administrators and counselors. However, there is another group of parents who spend quite a lot of time at the school.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) includes all parents but nearly all of the self-selected active members speak fluent English and are almost always mothers who do not work outside the home. As a group, they are very active and supportive of the school, and they have both an office and a bookstore on campus. They sponsor several big events (food fair, spring fair, teacher grants, and some speakers). They have also recently started reaching out to new families formally by matching them up with a “buddy” family in order to help smooth the transition into the school. Most often, families are matched based on preferred language of communication as well as region of origin and relative ages of their children.

Unsurprisingly, the active PTA members are often the ones who have had some exposure to the very Western concept of a PTA which is much less common in Asian cultures. As one parent noted during the Research Learning Exchange, parents coming from local school backgrounds are often uncomfortable in less well-defined volunteering roles within the school and may be reluctant to take this path. In efforts to reach out and help keep parents aware and involved, several sub-groups have arisen within the PTA. In the past few years, they have helped to organize LINE text messaging groups to connect parents of children within a certain grade level. In addition, there are several sub-groups organized by cultural heritage. The largest and longest standing group is the Chinese Parent Connection (CPC), a group that predominantly meets outside of school. While they are technically part of the PTA, the CPC often operates as an individual entity, inviting speakers and hosting other activities that occur in Mandarin. However, concerns about exclusivity have been raised and efforts are being made by both school leadership and PTA leadership to bring these groups together whenever possible to increase both equity and unity. With simultaneous translation on the horizon, the hope is that the language barrier will be broken, and all parents will hear the same messages from the school as well as help the school and each other understand the needs of the wider parent population.

Administrators

For the purposes of this study, I am including counselors in the same category as administrators because counselors are part of the "big picture" team and are often involved in decision-making that impacts students. While counselors are supervised by administrators and do not carry the same official leadership designation, counselors and administrators meet weekly with each other to discuss student information as well as school climate and plan middle school-wide projects and events.

Demographically, middle school administrators and counselors are all white and educated in Western English-speaking countries. Three are Australian/New Zealanders and two are American. I am the only member of this group who does not have children in the school. As a group, we get along well and meet weekly to discuss individual happenings with students, parents, and teachers, but also to discuss trends and vision for the middle school. Decisions within the middle school are discussed within this small group, but they may also be taken to the monthly steering committee meetings of department chairs and team leaders. There is also a higher level of central administration that oversees all three divisions of the school.

Teachers

Similar to the student population, the teachers of the school are more complex linguistically and culturally than they may appear at first glance. While the large majority of the 60 teachers in the middle school are white and were educated in Western English-speaking countries, many speak multiple languages, and several are part of cross-cultural households. Of the 20 teachers who are not white, many consider themselves to be Cross-Cultural Individuals (CCIs) who, like most international school students, experienced multiple cultures and languages in their homes and/or in their educations. Only the four Mandarin teachers and one math teacher were raised and educated solely in Taiwan.

Faculty members range in age from late-20s to early 70s, and contrary to the short stints at many other international schools, teachers tend to stay at the school for several years. It is rare for teachers not to re-sign after the initial two-year contract, and there are multiple teachers who have worked at the school for more than 30 years. Teachers generally live in the neighborhood surrounding the school and spend time with each other socially outside of school. Many teachers

have children who attend the school, and there are several teachers whose partners are also employed by the school.

The expectations for a rigorous curriculum and hard-working students also extend to teachers who often work late and into the weekends. It is not uncommon for teachers to be working and planning in their classrooms after hours, but many are often involved in sponsoring organized activities on the weekends. The library is open most Saturdays and the school hosts conferences and athletic events on weekends throughout the year. Many of these events occur through the robust extracurricular program which is sponsored completely by middle school teachers. This means that in addition to their teaching duties, teachers are doing anything from coaching badminton to sponsoring the Chinese Culture Club to leading robotics teams that compete around the world, and thus, are also developing relationships with students outside of the classroom. Most teachers enjoy these activities with their students.

Co-Practitioner Researchers

The purpose of this PAR study was to bring different constituent groups together to improve programs and experiences for all involved. Therefore, it was important that members of each constituent group were involved in the implementation and planning of the Community Learning Exchanges. An introduction to each member of the CPR team is shared in the following paragraphs.

Allison has been my counseling partner since I arrived at the school. She has been at the school for over 20 years, the majority of which have been spent as a classroom teacher in lower and then middle school. She has held team and department leadership titles but moved into the role of counselor the same year I arrived. Born and raised in New Zealand, Allison did her teacher training in Australia and eventually received her counseling certification from an

American university. She started her career teaching in New Zealand and then worked at another international school in Shanghai, China prior to moving to Taiwan. Allison and her husband, Alex, who is the associate principal, have two children who have grown up in the school.

Alex has worked as the middle school associate principal for over 10 years, but during his over 20-year tenure, he has also held the positions of head of PE for the entire school, dean of students in the upper school, and physical education teacher. He originally trained as a PE teacher in New Zealand and also worked in Shanghai with Allison. He is largely responsible for the robust co-curricular program in the middle school, and as a disciplinarian, Alex believes in helping a child work through mistakes. Alex and Allison are cognizant of the impact that their dual relationship has on the work they do together, and they work to separate these roles as much as possible.

Tracy, the faculty member of the group, teaches science and has been at the school for 5 years. She is bicultural, Chinese and British, and attended school in Germany before moving to the US for middle school, high school, and university. She speaks English and Chinese as well as some French.

Paula, the parent member of the group, is ethnically Taiwanese and has almost always lived in Taiwan. She went to local elementary and high school then finished her undergraduate studies in Taiwan and did a master's degree in the US. Her twin girls have been at the school since upper elementary school and attended local school prior. Paula's husband is an alumnus of the school.

Sarah, the original student member of the group, was in grade 8 when the project began. Her father is an ABC (American-born Chinese) and her mother is Taiwanese. She was born in

Taiwan and has always lived here. She came to the school in pre-kindergarten after attending a local nursery school. She is an athlete as well as a member of several academic clubs.

Steven joined the CPR team as a grade 7 student at the beginning of PAR Cycle Two. He attended the PAR Cycle One CLE as a participant, and the CPR group agreed that it would be beneficial to bring another student perspective onto the team. Steven was born in Taiwan and has lived here all his life. With one bicultural parent and one Japanese parent, he describes himself as one-quarter Taiwanese and three-quarters Japanese. Steven went to a local Mandarin-speaking school until grade 4 and then transferred to this school. He is an athlete, musician, and academically-minded student.

I approached these group members as they all readily agreed to be part of the pilot Community Learning Exchange (or first CLE in Steven's case) and expressed interest in continuing to be a part of this process. In addition, I made sure to round out the group of Co-Practitioner Researchers by inviting people from different cultural backgrounds as this influences the frames through which they see the school and their place in it. While they were selected to bring a perspective from their constituent group into the planning and implementation of the CLEs, it is important to remember that there is no single opinion or perspective that accounts for all within that group. Therefore, it was important that as a team, we understood our own frames and strived to seek out and include as many perspectives in the CLEs as possible.

In addition, their places within certain affinity groups also impacted their political capital within the school and therefore their willingness to speak up and out. As there is an inherent cultural power difference between children and adults, it was continuously important that the adult CPRs helped ensure that student voices were heard in the planning processes as well as the CLE activities. As CPRs, we also continued to use the circle to promote equity of voice as the

political dynamics explained earlier in this chapter exist within this group: the administrators supervise the teachers while the teachers grade the students who are also expected to submit to their parents. Relational trust was also a key ingredient for the positive functioning of this group.

My Role

Since college, I have only worked professionally as a counselor. During my final years of undergraduate study, I explored different graduate school prospects knowing that I wanted to take my psychology degree to another level. After thinking about developmental psychology, clinical psychology, and school psychology, I finally landed on school counseling out of a desire to work with (rather than research) a wide (rather than limited) range of children. I worked in a public middle school then two high schools, and now my first overseas job has been at an international middle school. Throughout my professional life, I have worked with colleagues, students, and families in a multitude of different situations. I have come to believe that positive relationships, between and among students, teachers, administrators, and parents, are the bedrock of a functioning school that appropriately serves its students' needs. I also believe that these positive relationships are formed over time by understanding and appreciating each other's unique perspectives.

I began this doctoral program in my sixth year at this school, meaning that I am established in my role and have developed strong relationships with many colleagues, students, and parents. As a counselor, I am in the unique position of having equal access to parents, teachers, students, and administrators, meaning that I have some insight into their individual perspectives, but also that I am able to step back and see how the entire system functions. I often find myself in the role of intermediary, helping to facilitate conversations between individuals from two different constituent groups: students and teachers or even parents and students. Now

as a Co-Practitioner Researcher, I bring this awareness of different people's perspectives into my role as I am able to draw others into the process and help them talk with each other.

In addition to working well with others in the school, I am also in a position where my role has grown during my tenure here. I have taken responsibility for a large portion of the scheduling work that happens every year, and I am involved in the planning and implementation of large-scale initiatives at the school, especially the wellness and character education programs. In doing so, I have learned quite a bit about how middle school programs match up with the overall vision of the school as well as what parts of the vision get the most attention from certain constituent groups. I am still learning how to get buy-in from more reluctant members of the faculty and trying to develop closer ties to parents who rarely come to school. Throughout this project, I explore my role as a middle leader working to bring different groups together.

Chapter Summary

As an American-style international school staffed by Western-educated teachers and administrators and catering mostly towards Asian students with parents educated in Asia, we are in a uniquely diverse and culturally rich setting. This PAR project seeks to engage that diverse group of students, parents, teachers, and administrators in reform processes together. Therefore, the unique cross-cultural setting and the various backgrounds of all involved are important pieces in understanding the study itself. In order for the study to be successful, the participants, and in particular the Co-Practitioner Researchers, need to be able to see their own place within the context of the school and how the various pieces fit together. The next chapter explains the specific design of this project and each of the PAR cycles that the CPR group and I undertook in order to get closer to our goal of increasing equity of voice and better serving this culturally diverse population.

CHAPTER 4: ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

The purpose of my participatory action research (PAR) project was to increase equity of voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process in ways that better serve this culturally diverse student and family population. My theory was that if representatives from all constituent groups come together to discuss topics relevant to the educational experience of students, information from these meetings will (a) drive the overall direction and concrete actions on those topics; (b) in turn, impact the ways we share information between and among the school and families; and (c) enhance participants' understanding of diverse perspectives as measured by analysis of participant interviews and other indicators of improvement in equity of voice and perspective-taking—including analysis of artifacts produced during the CLEs, meeting agendas, and memos.

I set out to accomplish this goal by collaborating with my Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPRs) to implement a new process for problem-solving and decision-making in my school. By utilizing the process of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) in the exploration of a topic slated for change, I sought to bring members of all constituent groups together to unpack the topic, and in the process, to contribute their unique, culturally-influenced perspectives on the related issues. In essence, the CLE methodology, including planning and implementation by the CPR team, formed the backbone of this PAR project. However, the CPRs also participated in other parts of the research into the effectiveness of the CLEs and changes that occur as a result of participation.

As I described in Chapter 2, CLEs are processes that honor the wisdom of participants and the power of place (Guajardo et al., 2016). These are opportunities for *community*

members—in this case, students, parents, teachers, and administrators—to come together to *exchange* their perspectives on various topics in ways that promote *learning* and problem-solving. According to Guajardo et al. (2016), CLEs often make use of circles in order to flatten any implicit hierarchies and promote the idea that all participants bring their own wisdom and perspective on a topic. In addition, CLEs are born out of the belief that those closest to a problem or issue in its specific local form are best suited to solve it. This belief is particularly pertinent in the context of my focus of practice because the constituents at my school bring a diverse set of cultural experiences and orientations toward the concepts of education and schooling. It is particularly important that school improvement efforts in this context involve attempts to understand these constituents' vastly different perspectives.

In the next section, I explain the methodology for the project as well as why it is particularly well-suited to this context. The rest of this chapter outlines the design and methodology of my PAR project, including the selection of participants, cycles of inquiry, data collection tools, and data analysis methods. At the end of the chapter, I address the role of reflection and the potential limitations of this study.

Research Design

Herr and Anderson (2015) identified five agreed-upon goals of action research: "(a) the generation of new knowledge, (b), the achievement of action-oriented outcomes, (c) the education of both the researcher and participants, (d) results that are relevant to the local setting, and (e) a sound and appropriate research methodology" (p. 67). Each of these goals is relevant in this project as the focus of practice centered around finding equitable ways to bring more voices into the inquiry and action portions of the decision-making process within a specific context.

In addition, this action research project was participatory in nature because its purpose was to "assist people to extend their understanding of their situation and to resolve significant issues or problems that confront them" (Stringer, 2014, p. 14). As I was a practitioner within the context of the setting, thus utilizing already established relationships with many of the participants in order to conduct the research, the research design was of the type that Herr and Anderson (2015) term *insider in collaboration with other insiders*. This section lays out the research questions that guided the research followed by an explanation of how I selected participants. I next give a detailed account of the methodology for each cycle of inquiry. I then describe the data that was collected from participants as well as myself. Finally, I detail the ongoing analysis that took place throughout the project.

Research Questions

My PAR project was oriented to answering one overarching question: Through the implementation of CLEs, to what extent do we increase equitable voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process at the school, thereby better serving a culturally diverse student and family population?

My PAR sub-questions include:

1. To what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants?
2. How do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling?
3. To what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers?
4. How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?

Participants

As Stringer (2014) asserted, researchers need to ensure that all constituents are represented in defining the problem to be investigated and the investigation process itself. My focus of practice is built upon this idea and supported by Guajardo et al.'s (2016) axiom that those closest to the problem are in the best position to solve it. Therefore, in this PAR project, I aimed to bring multiple constituent voices from among administrators, teachers, parents, and students into the problem-solving process at school through the CLEs, but I also planned to bring a sampling of those voices into the CLE planning and research process.

The more involved co-practitioner research (CPR) team included at least one member of each constituent group. As a counselor, I am often also seen as an administrator, and my co-counselor and I often meet with the associate principal in order to plan whole-school initiatives. Therefore, it was a natural decision to invite them to join me on the CPR team. In addition, I invited a teacher, parent, and student from the pilot CLE to join the CPR team as we approached PAR Cycle 1. A second student joined the team in PAR Cycle 2. This purposefully selected team helped plan, facilitate, and evaluate the CLE interventions as well as provided data regarding the changes in their own views and practices as a result of participation.

The wider set of participants were those individuals who attended and engaged in the CLEs themselves. These participants were invited from a list developed with help from the CPR team using a purposeful sampling technique aimed at including a diverse sampling of each constituent group and taking care to include members of various cultural and educational backgrounds as well as orientations towards volunteering and leadership activities (Merriam, 1988). While there was a limited number of administrators/counselors (five in total), care was

taken to include an equal number of students and other adults, split evenly between parents and teachers, in each CLE.

Participants in the first CLE were invited to attend the subsequent PAR Cycle Two CLE, however, all were not able to attend and were replaced using the same purposeful sampling technique. In addition, participants in the first CLE were asked if there were voices missing from the conversation, and the CPR team endeavored to include missing voices in the second iteration of CLE experiences. For example, it was noted that teachers that do not assign homework were missing from the first CLE, and some were added to the second CLE.

Cycles of Inquiry

In order to plan, implement, and research the effectiveness of the CLEs as well as the CPR team, I engaged in three PAR cycles over 18 months. As illustrated in Table 2, I addressed several goals aimed at addressing the broader systemic impacts of increasing equitable voice and better serving a culturally diverse population. For each goal, there were inputs occurring at different PAR cycles which lead to measurable outputs and outcomes that were intended to lead to these larger systemic impacts. The activities and research components of each cycle are then described in the next section.

PAR Cycle One: Fall 2017. The first PAR cycle took us through the establishment of the CPR team to the completion of the first CLE. This process began with the initial CPR team, comprised of myself, the associate principal, co-counselor, one parent, one teacher, and one student. Informed consent on the potential risks and benefits of participation was obtained from all adults and the student's parents as well as informed assent from the student (see Appendices B & C). Together we focused on two tasks: (a) choosing who would be invited to participate in

Table 2

Logic Model

Goals	Inputs/Activities	Timeline	Ends		
SMART-E: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Timed, & Equity-Focused	*In order to address the goals, the following inputs will be provided and activities will be accomplished.*		*If the activities are accomplished they will produce evidence of service delivery and fidelity of the goals (outputs), short and long-term changes (outcomes), and long-term systemic changes (broader systemic impacts).*		
			OUTPUTS (FIDELITY)	OUTCOMES	BROADER SYSTEMIC IMPACTS
Establish CLE group	Formulation of a group that is eclectic and diverse	Cycle 1	Did meetings happen Were all constituent groups represented	Participants see group commitment to change & representation for all	Change the ways we gather information and make decisions in the school
Implement culturally sensitive pedagogies	Activities selected by CPR team that engender trust and support within the room	Cycle 1	Did participants engage in activities Did they feel safe in the room	Participants feel comfortable sharing with each other	More likely to approach school personnel to share perspectives
Increase equity of all voices	Activities that allow collaborative discussion Exchange culturally-informed perspectives	Cycle 1	Did all voices feel heard Multiple modes of participation	Better understanding of differing perspectives Better understanding of own perspective in contrast	More solid cultural identity & "global perspective"

Table 2 (continued)

Goals	Inputs/Activities	Timeline	Ends		
SMART-E: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Timed, & Equity-Focused	*In order to address the goals, the following inputs will be provided and activities will be accomplished.*		*If the activities are accomplished they will produce evidence of service delivery and fidelity of the goals (outputs), short and long-term changes (outcomes), and long-term systemic changes (broader systemic impacts).* OUTPUTS (FIDELITY)	OUTCOMES	BROADER SYSTEMIC IMPACTS
Use information gathered from CLE to influence practice	Collate data from CLEs Develop action plans as a result of CLEs Measure impact	Cycle 1-3 Cycle 1&2 Cycle 3	Themes emerge Action plans created	Changes in practices related to topics of CLEs	Gain important insights that support collaborative decision-making in the school

the CLEs, and (b) selecting culturally sensitive pedagogies and practices that we would implement in the CLE.

In order to ensure that the CLE participants represented their constituent groups as closely as possible, the CPRs invited an eclectic, diverse group of constituents that included students, parents, teachers, and administrators from multiple cultural, educational, and social backgrounds. We took into consideration ethnic or cultural group, languages spoken, length of stay at the school, and extracurricular activities when selecting the participants.

A second task of the first PAR cycle was to plan the first CLE using culturally sensitive pedagogies. Together as a CPR team, we determined the best initial topic for the CLE to explore, homework, which had been suggested by the school principal and thus carried his approval. Then, the CPR team reviewed the lessons learned from the pilot CLE as well as selected the pedagogies to be implemented from among those suggested by Guajardo et al. (2016) to determine the agenda for the first CLE. These pedagogies are detailed in Table 3, and many of them were also modeled during our CPR team meetings.

Finally, the first PAR cycle culminated in the first CLE on homework. Working documents used during the CLE were collected, and notes were taken during activities so that themes and patterns could be analyzed. As part of the CLE process, we also sought feedback on the participants' experiences. After the CLE, one or more participants from each constituent group were invited to complete a semi-structured interview in order to provide insights into his or her perspective on the experience.

PAR Cycle Two: Spring 2018. PAR Cycle Two began with an opening exercise with the CPR team to discuss the outcome of the first CLE and its influence on policies and participants. We reviewed the themes that emerged from the first CLE as well as discussed the

Table 3

CLE Pedagogies

Pedagogy	Description	Purpose	Resulting Artifact
Circle	The group is gathered in a circle and a talking piece is passed around the room with each individual speaking only when in possession of the talking piece	Democratizing voice and eliciting and honoring wisdom	Notes, photos, or recordings
Appreciative Listening Protocol	Partners take turns answering a prompt. While in the listening role, the partner may not give verbal feedback.	Confidentially sharing with a partner a story that connects the person with the learning	Process notes or photos
InQuiry	Participants sort a set of statements about a topic in ways that reflect their individual perspectives. These are then statistically analyzed	Engaging participants in data collection and dialogue	Sorts and the resulting statistical analyses
Journey Line	In response to a prompt, participants plot related events on a timeline based on their importance	Helping participants tell their stories	Collected Journey Lines and any analyses completed as a result
World Café	At tables, small groups brainstorm around a prompt for a specified amount of time and then move to another table. A "table host" remains at each table to welcome the new group.	Helping participants co-construct understanding and knowledge	Posters from brainstorming sessions Notes from culminating meaning-making conversation
Learning Walks	Paired or small group conversations that take place while moving, preferably outdoors	Using a different type of dialogue to gain a fresh perspective	Notes or recordings of the conversations

Table 3 (continued)

Pedagogy	Description	Purpose	Resulting Artifact
Digital Engagement	Various forms of story-telling utilizing digital tools such as photos, sound, and video.	Helping participants tell their stories and increase their understanding	Completed stories
Performance	Individually or in groups, participants witness, perform or create through various methods (e.g. poetry, visual art, music, etc.).	Utilizing the wisdom or people and inspiring and motivating participants.	Videos or photos of performances
Community Site Visits	Visiting a site within the community while answering an essential question and utilizing other pedagogies	Engaging in inquiry, experiential learning, and making connections	Photos, videos, and notes
Community Mapping	Iterative process in which teams visit areas in the community, create representational maps, and analyze these maps with community members.	Identifying and analyzing the assets and issues within a community	Iterations of maps
Logic Model for Action	Participants brainstorm and then create a plan of action based on a prompt. They then receive feedback and make commitments based on reflection on the feedback.	Moves participants from reflection and understanding into thinking about action	Logic Models Commitment statements

Note. Adapted from Guajardo et al. (2016).

pedagogies used and their effectiveness in meeting the goal of increasing equity of voice. As a CPR team, we used this information to adjust pedagogies and plans for the next CLE. We also met to determine how the topic chosen in Cycle One should be adjusted for Cycle Two. As a group, we decided to continue exploring homework but to use the themes that emerged from PAR Cycle One to sculpt the questions and activities for the PAR Cycle Two CLE.

As a CPR team, we then facilitated the second CLE on homework. Part of the CLE focused on moving the participants from inquiry and understanding into action. This involved the creation of action plans. I again invited CLE participants from each constituent group to participate in an interview to share his or her perspectives on the CLE experience and its impact on practice. During this cycle, the CPR team continued to meet, and I continued to memo about my growth as a leader and other related meetings and conversations in which I was involved.

PAR Cycle Three: Fall 2018. The final PAR cycle focused on determining the broader transfer of the CLE process into the practices, policies, and philosophies of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Through the examination of meeting notes, policy documents, and conversations with constituents, I investigated the changes to homework policies, practices, and philosophies. Working with others, I also engaged in and examined efforts to increase student voice. The CPR team also met to examine the findings and discuss the changes and growth they saw in themselves. Concurrently, I also measured the transfer into my own leadership practice through the analysis of memos and meeting notes.

Data Collection

This PAR project made use of several qualitative measures of data collection. As the design of this project involved ongoing analysis, the collection strategy was emerging (Creswell,

1998). The goal of collecting data is to inform and generate conversations through the collection of artifacts that reveal facts, opinions, and insights (Yin, 1994).

Memos. These journal-type reflections were generated and collected throughout this PAR project, including during the pre-cycle and design process. These notes are written from the first-person perspective and allowed me to document my experiences and reflections throughout the process. While memos are mainly conceptual (Miles & Huberman, 1994), they assist the researcher in moving from raw data to explanations and meaning-making (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). For me, the memos were a real-time account of what happened and my evolving thoughts on what those events meant.

CLE documentation. As Stringer (2014) stated, "researchers can obtain a great deal of significant information by reviewing documents and records" (p.115). Therefore, during each CLE, there were several pieces of documentation collected, including agendas, relevant school policy documents, and all working documents used during the process. For example, in the first CLE, participants answered four questions about homework on a large sheet of paper divided into four sections (called a "four-square"). They did this collaboratively in affinity groups with their other constituent group members to record all answers. These four-square documents were pasted up within the room and then used in a meaning-making activity where mixed groups looked for and documented themes and divergences.

CPR meeting notes. Through each cycle, the CPR team took minutes in order to document our meetings as we planned the CLEs. These notes were correlated with CLE data and analyzed to determine change in practice over time as well the extent to which voices were equitable within the planning process. When discussing potential policy or procedural changes

that were recommended by the CLE participants, CPR meetings included administrators, and the notes will reflect actions taken on those recommendations.

Other meeting notes. During each cycle, I attended meetings where the topics of homework and/or equity of voice were discussed, either by design or by happenstance. On these occasions, I collected the official minutes if they existed, or I maintained my own documentation of the meetings. These notes were analyzed in conjunction with other data sources to determine changes in policies, practices, and philosophies related homework and equity of voice.

Policy documents. As a focus of this PAR project was to determine the transfer of this work into the roles and practices of constituents, we analyzed the policies that existed prior to PAR Cycle 1 as well as the adjustments that were made during the course of this project. Of particular interest were documents related to homework policies in the middle school.

Interviews. After each CLE, at least one participant from each constituent group participated in a semi-structured interview in order to elicit his or her feedback and reflections from the event. As Patton (1990) stated, "The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 278). In addition, this process is reflective and allows the interviewee to "explore his or her experience in detail and to reveal the many features of that experience that have an effect on the issue investigated," (Stringer, 2014, p. 105). The interview protocol (see Appendix F) focused primarily on questions that addressed the research sub-questions related to voice and changes to perspective and practice in relation to the CLE topic. The semi-structured design ensures for consistency of information obtained but also provides flexibility for follow-up questions (Patton,

1990). The interviews were audio recorded and stored digitally in the researcher's secure Dropbox.

Conversation notes. Throughout all three cycles, but particularly during PAR Cycle Three, I kept track of informal conversations I had with others that related to my research questions. As a practitioner-researcher, I often found myself talking with constituents about other things when the topics of homework, the CLEs, or equity of voice came up naturally. For example, when speaking with a teacher about a student during PAR Cycle Two, she ended the conversation by thanking me for the invitation to participate in the most recent CLE, sharing how her ideas about homework had changed as a result. In these instances, I documented the conversations and included them in the subsequent coding and analysis, explained in the next section.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, meaning that the data collected informed the analysis and vice versa. Rather than waiting until the end of the project, I collaborated with the CPR group to analyze our work together throughout the process. This technique is known as constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The data analysis tools utilized in this project were selected for their ability to help draw meaning within this context because "interpretation is the key aspect of qualitative data analysis" (Gibbs, 2002, p. 14). The memos, artifacts (CLE documents and notes from meetings and conversations), and transcribed interviews were analyzed with a general content analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Themes and patterns that emerged from each type of data source were comparatively analyzed (Creswell, 1998). In order to complete this analysis, I used an open coding technique in which I read each of the transcripts, artifacts, and memos and used different

colored highlighters to denote emerging themes and patterns for each research sub-question (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Table 4 links each sub-question to the data source from which information was gathered. I then triangulated the themes and patterns from artifacts with those from interviews and vice versa and use the most common themes and patterns to create codes. Next, I went back and purposefully re-read and re-coded the interview transcripts, memos, and artifacts according to these codes. This analysis was ongoing, and emerging themes were shared with the CPR team to inform their work as well as to utilize a member check strategy (Rudestam & Newton, 2011).

Role of Reflection/Praxis

As my PAR project involved multiple cycles of inquiry and iterative data aimed at understanding subjective information, reflection played a large role in understanding how individual perspectives and practices change over time. During the inception of this project, I continuously reflected upon my personal goals for my professional development as well as for my school. I undertook this particular PAR project out of a desire to understand my current students and their families as well as to improve the ways in which we incorporate their perspectives into the decisions that impact their lives. However, I arrived at this particular research methodology and these research questions after considerable reflection on my own as well as with students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and my ECU coaches. With the input of those with whom I work most closely as well as those most versed in this type of PAR project, my plans evolved.

However, this type of reflection was ongoing, and the CLE methodology I chose allowed for iterative data to continuously inform the CLE processes themselves. Therefore, the reflections on this work provided by memos and interviews from participants, CPR team

Table 4

Linking Data Collection with Research Questions

Sub-Question	Data Source
To what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants?	Participant interviews Documentation from CLEs CPR meeting notes Memos
How do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling?	Participant interviews Memos Conversation notes Meeting notes
To what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers?	Participant interviews Memos CPR meeting notes Conversation notes Policy documents
How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?	Memos CPR meeting notes

members, and ECU coaches, provided formative data that allowed us to improve the process while at the same time, influence the outcomes of this PAR project.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of participants and the security of data collected are very important in this study. Therefore, pseudonyms were utilized for all participants and the school that is the context for this study, and no materials were replicated or disseminated in any way. In addition, all transcripts and recordings of interviews, memos and meeting notes will be maintained in a secure, locked location and destroyed one year after the completion of this study. As there were administrators acting as CPRs in the study, they were involved in data collection and therefore privy to information collected that is intended to inform our work together. All adult participants gave informed consent and were able to withdraw consent at any time. Children gave assent while informed consent was obtained from their parents or guardians.

Study Limitations

Issues of trustworthiness, including the dependability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability of the findings, were addressed in this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings of this study are specific to this context alone. Therefore, rather than seeking the generalizability of traditional research, this study aimed to provide what Stake termed *naturalistic generalization* by providing narrative accounts that might result in *vicarious experiences* that allow other researchers and practitioners to determine the applications for their own contexts (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Dependability was addressed in multiple ways. Each of the three iterative PAR cycles provided its own unique set of data points that could be compared with each other. In addition,

the triangulation of multiple sources of data from all constituent groups as well as the reflexive design of my coding protocol provided dependability.

Particular attention was paid to the confirmability and credibility of this study. As a constituent of the international school where my PAR project took place, I came into this project with already-established ideas about the perspectives of members of other constituent groups as well as the current processes for making decisions. In addition, I tend to view information shared by others through my own unique cultural and professional lens. Therefore, to address the confirmability and credibility of the findings, the research was conducted with the help of the CPR team which consisted of members of other constituent groups. As a team, we planned, implemented, and reviewed the CLEs, which allowed for multiple perspectives to be taken into account. This team also provided ongoing feedback on through member checks (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). Finally, my ECU coaches provided ongoing support and feedback for the work and research design, adding a type of peer review that Herr and Anderson (2015) termed dialogic validity.

Another potential credibility limitation of this PAR study related to the politics and power at play within the school context. Regarding the selection of participants for the CLEs, the CPR team worked to invite a diverse and representative sample of participants from each constituent group, but there are implicit cultural beliefs and traditions that may have prevented certain members of the community from agreeing to participate or from sharing openly during the CLEs. A related limitation is that there are implicit hierarchies and standards within the school that do not vanish when we come together and sit in a circle. Teachers grade students, administrators evaluate teachers, and parents discipline their children and pay for the education that they receive from the school. However, the CLE methodology is built on the belief that all

constituents have wisdom to share and deserve to have a voice with which to share it. Therefore, when recruiting participants as well as when facilitating the CLEs, it was of utmost importance that the CPR team and I made this belief clear and provided guidelines that created a safe space in which to work together on the topic.

A related potential credibility limitation was my own position within the school and its related power. I am in an influential role within the school, meaning that care needed to be taken to ensure that all participants were giving informed consent without any coercion or feeling that they must participate. However, my position also presented limitations to my power as all final decisions rest with my principal and upper administration. There was full administrative support of my PAR project (see Appendix B), but it was within their power to halt the CLEs completely at any time for any reason. In order to safeguard against this happening, one administrator was on the CPR team and administrators were always invited to participate in the CLEs.

The research design of this study incorporated and triangulated multiple types of data from multiple sources, actively addressed issues of power and politics, and relied on an in-depth, iterative approach. Taken together, it is clear that the study preserved the issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter Summary

Within this chapter, I outlined my theory of action for determining the extent to which CLEs increase equitable voice among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process in order to better serve a culturally diverse population. With each PAR cycle, the CPR team and I conducted CLEs and gathered data that was analyzed to determine the extent to which this new process met our goals for decision-making and understanding. Through

ongoing analysis, we were able to make recommendations for future CLE implementation within the school. In the next chapter, I describe the findings of the first PAR cycle.

CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE ONE

Introduction

The focus of this participatory action research (PAR) project was on establishing a new process for reform efforts that is thoughtful, data-driven, and inclusive of multiple voices of the school community. Using the methodology of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) to bring diverse voices together for discussions, I hoped to help increase equity of voice and establish a process that leads to better serving a culturally diverse population. In this chapter, I first describe the process through which the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group and I established ourselves as a group, set up a Community Learning Exchange (CLE), and gathered data. I next explore the themes related to both process and content that emerged as a result of data analyses as well as how these themes are connected to the research questions and emerging framework. Finally, I explain how the findings from this cycle informed the plan for PAR Cycle Two.

Process

The PAR first cycle took place over the course of one academic semester (Fall 2017) and included several activities leading up to, during, and after the CLE event held in November 2017. At the start of the semester, I finalized the CPR team with representatives from each constituent group: administrators, teachers, parents, and students. This group collectively met to plan and organize the CLE. The CLE itself was a main event and included several constructivist elements designed to encourage inquiry and dialogue about homework between and among members of different constituent groups. I kept personal memos and dialogued with members of all constituent groups as well as my ECU coaches throughout the semester. After the CLE, I conducted follow-up interviews with one parent, one teacher, one administrator, and three students. Finally, the CPR group met at the end of the semester to reflect on the CLE.

In this section, I provide a detailed account of the activities as well as the data collection and analysis that took place in the first PAR cycle. These details provide a vivid account of what was done to set the stage for the subsequent emergent themes that were generated from interviews, memos, CPR group meetings, and the CLE journey lines, four-squares, and closing circle.

CPR Group Creation

One of the first and most important tasks of PAR Cycle One was to finalize the Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) team with representatives from all four constituent groups. Going into the school year, I had an idea of which people I would be inviting, but I had not spoken with all of them. As the year began, I spoke with Alex, the associate principal and a driving force behind change in the middle school, who said he was happy to join the team. His wife, Allison, is one of my counseling partners in the middle school, and she was also keen to be a part of the team. For the student, parent, and teacher members of the team, I looked to participants from the pilot CLE that occurred in the previous semester (described in Chapter 3). This was a small group, but as they had experience with a positive CLE, I expected them to be more comfortable with the task of planning the CLE. Sarah, an eighth-grade student, Tracy, a sixth-grade teacher, and Paula, a parent of eighth-grade twins, agreed to join the team. The final group is described in Table 5.

CPR Meetings

The CPR team met as a group several times prior to the CLE. In these meetings, we established relationships and trust with each other while also exploring the axioms and protocols of CLEs and discussing how they can be utilized for our chosen topic and population. In each CPR meeting, we used opening and closing circles as well as another CLE pedagogy such as

Table 5

CPR Group

Name	Constituent Group	Notes
Lori	Admin/Counselor	Self, counselor, medium length of stay at the school, no children
Alex	Admin/Counselor	Associate Principal, long term, faculty parent
Allison	Admin/Counselor	Counselor, previously a teacher, faculty parent
Sarah	Student	Grade 8 student, long term, speaks Mandarin at home, athlete.
Tracy	Teacher	Grade 6 science teacher & robotics coach, less than 5 years at the school, no children. Taiwanese and British.
Paula	Parent	Parent of grade 8 twins, long term at the school. Went to school in Taiwan.

journey lines and learning walks. As a team, we saw our duties to include selecting a diverse group of participants, determining what questions needed exploration with regards to homework, and selecting the pedagogies to be used. Logistics were also discussed, including the timing of the event, room set-up, and food to be served. Finally, the CPR team also met after the CLE to discuss the data that emerged and determine the next steps to take.

Determine participants. An important part of the CPR group's role was to select and invite to the CLE a diverse and eclectic group of participants that was representative of our diverse and eclectic student, parent, and teacher population. During the course of our discussions, we determined that we wanted between 50 and 60 participants in order to maximize diversity but also allow for intimate group discussions.

Sarah, the student group member, also suggested that we include more students in the CLE than members of any other group in order to help them feel more comfortable around so many adults, and the group felt this was a good idea. Therefore, we determined to select 24 students, eight from each grade level. In choosing the students to invite, we tried to select students who come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, have varying lengths of stay at the school, participate in various after-school activities, and have varied levels of academic achievement.

All five counselors and administrators were invited. In addition, we selected 12 teachers from a variety of grade levels and courses that assign homework (English, math, science, history, and world language). Efforts were also made to ensure that teachers came from different educational and cultural backgrounds, had varying lengths of stay at the school, and held a variety of levels of leadership positions within the school.

Twelve parents were selected by looking at their own backgrounds as well as their children's achievement and activities. Efforts were made to ensure that parents came from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds and had children with varying levels of academic achievement and involvement in school activities. We were particularly motivated to ensure that there were dads as well as moms in the parent groups.

Once the group of participants was selected, the CPR team divided the list and personally invited the participants he or she felt comfortable inviting. It was my request that we share this task among the CPR group members, but as the student, teacher, and parent on the team were only familiar with a small number of potential invitees, the majority of invitations were made by Allison and me. These invitations were initially verbal, either in person or on the phone, but we followed up with an email invitation. I also sent reminder emails to all participants as the CLE drew closer.

Determine content and pedagogy. The topic of the CLE was quickly determined to be homework as this was an area that the administrators had suggested, wanting to examine closely. As a CPR group, we accepted this suggestion as homework is a topic that impacts all constituents' lives and there are many different perspectives about how it should be handled in the school. However, because this is a broad topic to explore, a second task of the CPR group was to determine what questions about homework needed to be answered. As a group, we brainstormed many questions and ultimately determined that we wanted to gather perspectives on the purpose of homework as well as participants' experiences doing homework and the strengths and weaknesses of current policies and procedures.

Throughout the CPR planning meetings, I utilized various CLE pedagogies, including circles, journey lines, and learning walks, in order to enhance the learning of the group but also

to increase members' familiarity with them. For example, in our first CPR meeting's opening circle, we shared the enduring memories and lessons learned in the pilot CLE. In another meeting, we utilized Journey Lines to share our own stories of significant learning experiences. In one meeting, we discussed the concept of Gracious Space (Hughes & Grace, 2010) and what would be necessary to establish it within our CLE. Using that as a guide, we discussed the pedagogies we had used as well as those outlined in Table 3 in the last chapter, and we ultimately selected the ones to use in the CLE. An initial draft agenda was also shared with one of my ECU coaches, and her suggested tweaks were considered and adopted by the CPR team. The pedagogies ultimately chosen are included in the next section outlining the CLE activities.

Community Learning Exchange

In November 2017, 53 students, parents, teachers, and administrators gathered to discuss the topic of homework (see Participants, Appendix G, for details). Participants sat at assigned tables, each consisting of six members of their affinity group. The two-hour evening event was introduced by the middle school principal. Following the introduction, I explained the concept of CLEs and shared the anticipated outcomes and essential agreements (see Agenda, Appendix H, for details).

Using a constructivist process in which individuals shared experiences and perspectives with a peer or peers in their affinity group, we co-constructed meaning with a larger affinity group, and then shared our group sense-making with others outside our affinity groups. This meaning-making process of working first with affinity group members and then discussing themes with others occurred two times. The first round was a Journey Line activity where we discussed positive and negative aspects of significant homework experiences, and the second

round was a 4-square activity where we discussed perspectives about aspects of homework at the school. The final culminating activity of the CLE was a circle with all participants.

Journey line activity. After introducing the event, I facilitated the first set of activities where participants reflected on and created a journey line of their experiences with homework. The journey line prompt was: What stands out to you about homework as important or significant to your learning (see Appendix I). I modeled a journey line, and then participants individually completed their journey lines. They then shared one experience with a partner at their table. After discussing an experience with a partner, the tables of six analyzed their journey lines and recorded the positive and negative aspects of how they remembered homework experiences. Captured in Figure 11, all participants then stood up and shared their takeaways from the table discussion with someone from another table. We then rotated to share with a second person from another table.

Four-square. Allison, a co-counselor and CPR group member, facilitated the second round of activities. Participants, in affinity groups at tables, completed a chart answering four questions about homework: what is the purpose of homework, what is going well with homework at the school, what are parents' roles in homework, and what do you wish was different about homework at the school. Once complete, these charts were hung along the back wall of the room. Participants completed a gallery walk, individually reading each poster and taking note of themes, similarities and differences, and "a-ha" moments (see Figure 12).

After the gallery walk, participants moved to a new table, this time with a mix of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. As a mixed group, they shared and compared notes, clarifying questions that arose and discussing and creating a master list of themes,

Figure 11. Homework experiences.

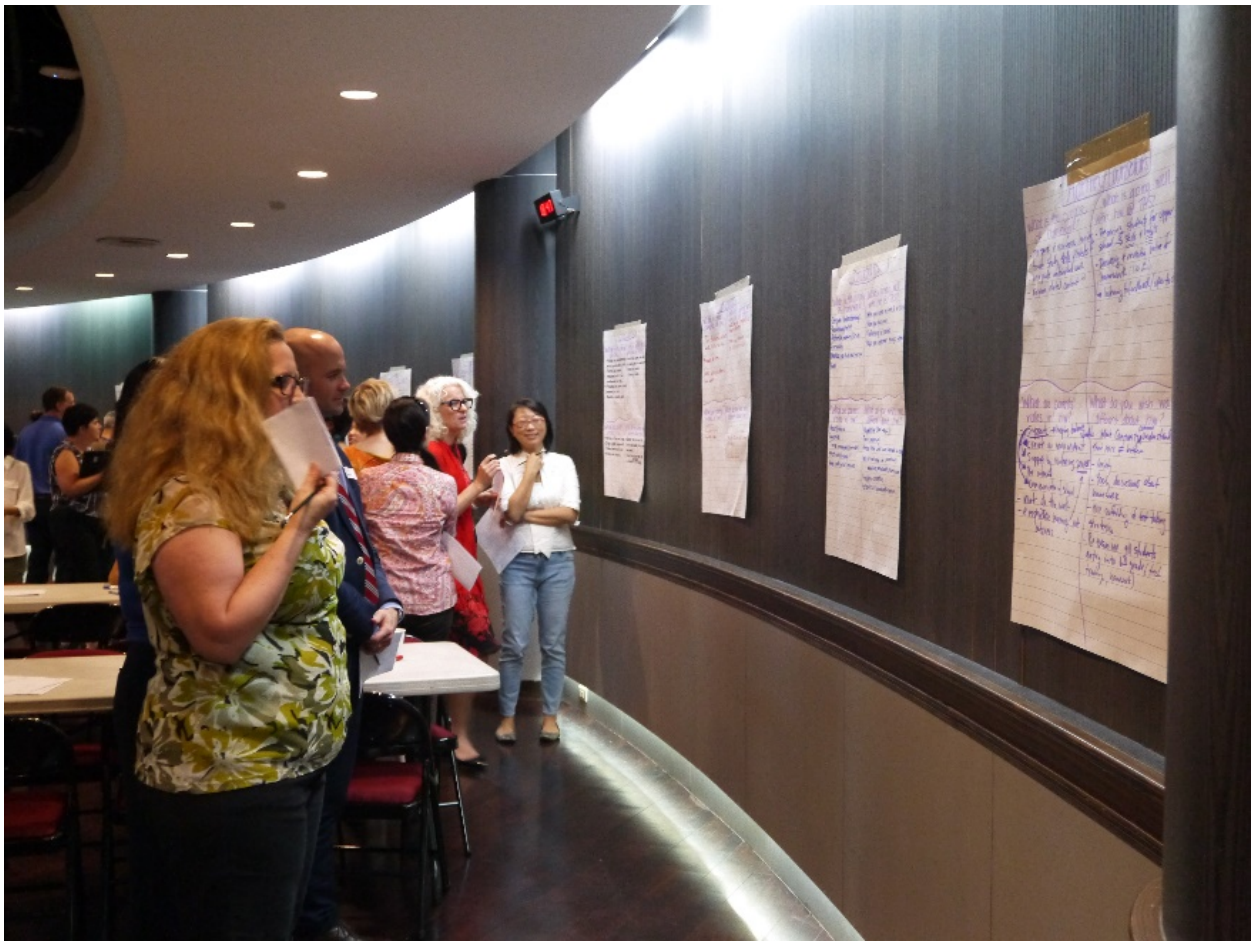

Figure 12. Gallery walk of responses to questions about homework.

similarities and differences, and a-has. After discussing in smaller mixed groups, groups reported out, sharing the themes and discussion points.

Closing circle. Alex, the associate principal and a CPR group member, facilitated the closing activity. All participants moved into an open section of the room and stood in a large circle. Each participant shared a word or phrase describing their experience during the CLE, and then Alex closed the CLE with words of thanks and looking towards the future.

Data Collection and Analysis

Several forms of data were analyzed to examine what happened throughout PAR Cycle One. First, I wrote memos to myself throughout the semester. Some of these memos were in response to graduate school assignments while others were recordings of my thoughts after meetings or discussions with others about my research. These memos serve as to-do lists and memory aids as well as a running record of my ongoing meaning-making process while experiencing PAR Cycle One and linking theories I was learning to my leadership practices.

In the CLE, we had multiple pieces of evidence, including the individual journey lines, tables of positive and negative attributes of homework, affinity group four-squares, and the mixed group lists of themes. The CPR group meeting agendas, notes, and the transcript from the final meeting after the CLE also provide data. Once the CLE was completed, I gathered all documents from the event as well as my memos and all meeting agendas from the CPR group meetings. In addition, I interviewed one participant from each of the adult constituent groups and three student participants. After transcribing the interviews as well as a follow-up CPR group meeting, I inductively coded the data, creating topical codes and then variations within each code group. Each time a code appeared, I placed a tick mark in my data table based on where the code appeared. After coding several pieces of data, I completed a second round of deductive coding

where I looked at the emerging codes and adjusted them as I began to make sense of the findings with the help of my ECU coaches. As I completed this second round of coding and sense-making, themes began to emerge that related to the process of the CLEs and learning from others while other themes emerged related to the specific CLE topic of homework. These emerging themes are described in the next section, and portions of the resulting coding table are included in the relevant sub-sections.

Emerging Themes

The evidence provided a strong indication that engaging in a Community Learning Exchange was meaningful for participants, both as a process of learning from others and as a way to better understand the specific topic of homework. As a result of their participation in CLEs, *members of each constituent group honored and understood the perspectives of others while also feeling their own wisdom was honored, expressed feelings of connection to others and the school as a whole, and experienced shifts in their thinking*. In addition, participants came away from the experience with a deeper understanding of homework at the school as well as an understanding of the concerns and needs of all constituent groups when it comes to homework. Finally, participants also looked to the future, asking what comes next with both in relation to changes to homework policies and procedure and in relation to utilizing CLEs as a process for change. In the following sections, I expand upon each of these three themes: (1) learning from others, (2) homework reimagined, and (3) a community ripe for change.

Learning from Others

While affinity group members most often speak to and spend time with each other, CLEs are organized around a set of axioms, one of which makes it clear that "crossing boundaries enriches the ways we learn and develop" (Guajardo et. al, 2016, p. 4). During PAR Cycle One of

the project, data have emerged supporting the conclusion that the CLE process allowed for dialogue and meaningful interactions with others. During the closing circle of the CLE, participants were asked to share a word or phrase to describe their experience. As shown in Table 6, their responses fell into categories of connectedness, value, enjoyment, future orientation, and feeling special, indicating that participants had meaningful interactions, expanded their understanding of different perspectives, and saw the experience as a positive one. As I conducted interviews with participants and met with the CPR team to discuss the event, similar themes related to learning from others continued to emerge. Participants acknowledged varying perspectives, felt connected to others and included in the school, and experienced shifts in their understanding of the topic and others. They also continued to discuss changes that may emerge or were already emerging as a result of their participation in the CLE.

As I analyzed the data from the varying sources, the evidence that participants drew meaning from and learned from their interactions with others fell into three overarching categories which are explored in the following sub-sections. First, participants noticed and stated that perspectives existed that were different from their own. Second, participants felt a sense of connectedness to others as they crossed boundaries and felt a sense of alliance and inclusion in the decision-making process. Finally, participants recounted shifts in their thinking as a result of their interactions with others.

Varied perspectives. An anticipated outcome of the CLE was for participants to understand different perspectives, and one theme that emerged during PAR Cycle One was that participants noticed and expressed a variety of points of view while also advocating for the inclusion of multiple voices. As demonstrated in Table 7, many people discussed the fact that there were variations in perspectives on different subjects, and a few explicitly called the sharing

Table 6

Themes of Closing Circle Words/Phrases Describing the PAR Cycle One CLE Experience

Theme	Answer – Number of Times Shared
Connected to others	Different perspectives – 8 Shared experiences – 8 Candid – 3 Surprise – 3
Valuable	Insightful – 5 Meaningful – 5 Positive – 2 Reflecting – 1
Enjoyable	Exciting – 4 Fun – 2 Tiring in a good way – 1
Looking towards the future	Change – 5 Hope – 2
Special	Proud – 2 Appreciative - 2
Positive	Exciting – 5 Constructive – 1 Valuable – 1 Proud – 1 Open – 1 Reduce Stress – 1

Table 6

Varied Perspectives and Expressed Points of View (PoV)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
PoV: Self		4			3	2	
PoV: Other	5	5		4	6	3	7
PoV: Affinity group	1	4	1		3	1	5
PoV: Big Picture	1	2		1			
Varied Perspectives: noticed	1	2				2	
Varied Perspectives: valuable	3	3	2			1	2
Varied Perspectives re: homework	1		4	1	1		2
Varied Perspectives re: tech			4	1		1	
Voice: Call for increase	1	3	1	1	1		
Voice: Positive			2	3	1		

of those perspectives valuable. For example, a parent expressed appreciation for the event, stating that “it let me understand teachers' thinking, student thinking, and principal's thinking” (Penny, Interview, 11/8/2017). In addition, a student noted that when he moved from the student group to a mixed group containing parents, teachers, administrators, and students, “the diversity of that group kind of affected the quality of the ideas positively” (Simon, Interview, 11/9/2017).

Moreover, in a number of instances, participants went beyond simply noticing that variations in perspectives exist to actually verbalize different and distinct points of view and classified them according to whom they belong. These data indicate that participants not only understood that others had different points of view than themselves but also understood what those views actually are and voiced those ideas in other settings. For example, after the CLE, an administrator spoke about the parental point of view on technology, sharing that “I think parents are still looking for ways to manage the way in which we do homework which is the digital part of it” (Adam, Interview, 11/7/2017). Similarly, a student spoke from the teacher point of view, saying that they “have homework, which is making our homework and the materials” (Samantha, Interview, 11/9/2017).

Finally, several instances indicate that participants requested to hear the perspectives of others or commented on the value of including varying perspectives in the conversations. For example, in the follow-up CPR meeting on November 13, 2017, Allison, a counselor, commented that one of her takeaways was that “we really need to talk to students more.” A teacher also thought of a type of voice that was missing from the room, one who does not give homework but who requires a lot of students’ time, saying that he would like to see us include “people who are there with their focus on extra-curricular….to look at this from the perspective of someone who’s gotta bring kids in and work with them on weekends” (Tom, Interview,

11/6/2017). Both comments are illustrations of participants who saw the value in learning the perspectives of others and hearing from multiple voices.

Connectedness. As referenced earlier in Table 6, the most common descriptors shared by CLE participants in the closing circle were related to their experiences interacting with others. While several participants recognized differences in perspectives and commented on commonalities they discovered, a few others expressed surprise at what they learned and commented on the candid nature of the discussions. The discussions with the CPR group as well as the interviews required participants to expand upon their experiences with others before, during, and after the CLE, and another emerging theme related to feelings of connectedness arose as a result. Illustrated in Table 8, I tabulated instances in which CPR members, interviewees, and I recognized or referenced feelings of connectedness. Most commonly, we discussed crossing boundaries across power lines, feeling included in the decision-making process, and noticing the development of alliances with others. In addition, positive emotions were much more prevalent than negative emotions. These feelings emerged around four key themes explored below: boundary crossings, inclusion, alliances, and positive emotions.

Boundary crossings. Several interviewees and CPR group members spoke 17 times during or post-CLE about crossing boundaries to have discussions with others who were different than the usual persons they talk to. A central tenet of CLEs is to provide the space and opportunities for members of a community to converse with each other and share stories across generations (Guajardo et al., 2016). Therefore, to some degree, the event provided the space for, and explicitly required participants to, cross boundary lines and speak with people who were from different affinity groups. Table 8 delineates the instances in which participants and I referenced these boundary crossings in interviews, meetings, and memos, and explicitly naming

Table 7

Connectedness

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students	Total
Boundary Crossing: within group	1	5	1	1			2	10
Boundary Crossing: Across power lines	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	11
Boundary Crossing: Across cultures	2	2						4
Boundary Crossing: Common ground	1		5	1	1			8
Inclusion: Need for	2							2
Inclusion: Feeling	1	2		2	1	1	3	10
Inclusion: Effort to	4	5						9
Inclusion: Barrier to	1							1
Alliance: Need for	4	2		1				7
Alliance: Achieved	6	1	1	3	1	1	4	17
Alliance: Partial/ Separated groups	1	2			1		1	5
Alliance: Absent	1							1
Pos Emotion: Supported	2		1				1	4

Table 8 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students	Total
Pos Emotion: Empowered							2	2
Pos Emotion: Enjoyment	2		4	2				8
Pos Emotion: success	5		2		1		2	10
Pos Emotion: Hope	2						1	3
Pos Emotion: Excitement	2		1				2	5
Pos Emotion: Challenged	1							1
Pos Emotion: Comfort/Familiarity				1	2			3
Pos Emotion: Appreciation	4					3		7
Pos Emotion: Pleasant surprise	1				1			2
Pos Emotion: Clarity						1		1
Pos Emotion: Acceptance	3							3
Neg Emotion: Worry	6	2					1	9
Neg Emotion: Second Guessing	1							1

Table 8 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students	Total
Neg Emotion: Disappointment	2							2
Neg Emotion: Hesitant	1							1
Neg Emotion: Skepticism	2							2
Neg Emotion: Uncomfortable		1		1			1	3
Neg Emotion: Implicated	1	1						2
Neg Emotion: Annoyed	3							3

these during and after the CLE brings a level of consciousness to the importance of crossing boundaries to understand different perspectives. For example, a student referenced the conversations she had with people of different ages, saying "I felt kind of good because we get to see different viewpoints of different generations and it was exciting to see different generations actually have very similar thoughts" (Sophie, Interview, 11/9/2017). A teacher also mentioned that she was "impressed with the maturity of the students" and "really enjoyed" the conversations with the students (Tracy, CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017). On several occasions, participants cited boundary crossings that resulted in finding common ground. As a teacher shared, "overall, I found the parallels between what the teachers, administrators, and parents broadly said about homework, that … ideally, we'd like to lessen the amount of it, we'd like to lessen the amount of stress that it causes" (Tom, Interview, 11/6/2017).

While interviewees did not mention cultural boundary crossings, it is unlikely that they only spoke with people from similar backgrounds, given the care that was taken to select a diverse group of participants. We did not ask participants to identify their cultural backgrounds when interacting with others at the CLE while we explicitly grouped and labeled them according to affinity groups. Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of noticed differences were ones that crossed affinity group lines. However, one could surmise that these boundary crossings were occurring across cultural lines to some extent as well.

Inclusion: Honoring wisdom. Another emerging part of the theme of connectedness is the recognition of being included in the decision-making process. As noted in Table 8, efforts to include multiple perspectives were part of the pre-CLE CPR meetings as well as my memos leading up to the event. Early in PAR Cycle One as I was setting up the CPR team, each of my memos referenced my goal to include members of each constituent group on that team. In

addition, the CPR meeting minutes and my memos leading up to the CLE all referenced our efforts to make sure that we honored the wisdom of participants and made sure that they felt included in the decision-making process. For example, during the second CPR group meeting, we discussed which constituents would be invited to the CLE, taking care to include people from each group who come from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, have varied interests outside of school, and who have different lengths of stay at the school. In addition, we worked to make sure that the pedagogies selected exhibited Gracious Space (Hughes & Grace, 2010) and allowed for conversations geared towards inquiry and action.

The evidence accumulated that our efforts were successful as this feeling of inclusion in the decision-making process was expressed by members of all constituent groups during the post-CLE interviews. All expressed inclusion as a positive aspect of the CLE and an indicator that, as a parent put it, "the school really cares about the students, parents, and teachers" (Penny, Interview, 11/8/2017). One student described telling his friends about the CLE because he "was pretty excited because it felt good to be at least part of the community and take action and … be involved somehow" (Simon, Interview, 11/9/2017).

Alliance. Another important part of connectedness is the emerging theme of alliance within and among groups of constituents. Alliance, in this case, means the feeling of being in agreement with others, either in purpose or perspective, and not being alone in one's opinion. As a teacher put it, this is the sense that "we're all in this together" when it comes to making the right decisions for our school (Tom, Interview, 11/6/2017). The coded data, shared in Table 8, reveal that the CPR group and I were aware of the need for alliance as we planned the CLE and that in hindsight after the CLE, members of all constituent groups noted the feeling of being on the same side. A student expressed his discovery of this alliance by saying, "I realized that the

issue of homework was actually the entire school community's problem that they were trying to solve. And that really helped me because I realized that I wasn't alone, and you know, having trouble with homework" (Simon, Interview, 11/9/2017). These alliances are powerful as they build relationships and a sense of shared purpose and diminish the feeling of isolation or a "just me" problem. As a CPR group member stated, "people want the same thing…good curriculum and a great school experience" (Alex, CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017). In addition, these connections can be carried over into other work that we do. Speaking about the power of the closing circle, an administrator said, "I think that also brings community because everyone sees a shared positive and a shared value in doing this process" (Adam, Interview, 11/7/2017).

Partial alliances are instances in which more than one constituent group was in alliance, but all groups were not on the same side. Both the teacher and a student noted that teachers, administrators, and students had similar views on technology while the parents had differing perspectives. The student said, "I was kind of actually surprised when the teacher and students have similar thoughts… while the parents are just not similar [to the teachers and parents]" (Samantha, Interview, 11/9/2017).

Positive emotions. Overall, the positive emotions expressed in memos, CPR meetings, and interviews with CLE participants far outnumbered the negative emotions. In fact, the majority of negative emotions occurred in my memos, with worry being the most common negative emotion. In addition, with the exception of a couple of student comments about initial concern for offending someone and another about potential awkward interactions, the emotions expressed during the post-CLE interviews and CPR meeting were almost exclusively positive, supporting the conclusion that participants had positive reactions to the event. Many expressed feelings of hope and excitement as well as feeling empowered or successful as a result of the

CLE. Referenced earlier, a student commented on feeling empowered by being part of the decision-making process. In addition, a student said, "I was just excited to try [the CLE] … and then I realized it was a really good experience for me" (Sophie, Interview, 11/9/2017). The parent who was interviewed spoke most about her appreciation for the event, saying "I really appreciate the school having this event and share other people's thinking and actually this is a benefit for all the students" (Penny, Interview, 11/8/2017).

Shifts in thinking. During PAR Cycle One, evidence also mounted that noticing variations in perspectives and making connections to others led to shifts in thinking. As coded in the data (see Table 9), it was common for interviewees to discuss shifts in thinking that occurred as a result of participating in the learning exchange process. These shifts occurred as participants developed new understandings of others' perspectives as well as of homework.

Shifts regarding others. In particular, the conversations with people outside of their affinity groups led to new understandings of others, either in understanding others' perspectives to a greater degree or in changing the way they view that person or group of people as a whole. For example, Simon revealed that he "wasn't expecting this much correlation between students and teachers which some people believe are polar opposites" while another student, Samantha, shared that she saw her teachers differently after the CLE as she now realizes that "teachers put a lot of thought into homework too" (Interview, 11/9/2017). In addition, Sarah, the student on the CPR team, shared that she feels like she **"**understand[s] the perspectives [of different constituent groups] even more than people in the learning exchange because I get to talk to [the other CPR team members" (CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017). Similarly, a teacher noted that he saw one of his students in a different light after the CLE, as he "was a little surprised to see him there, but then he had really, really valuable contributions and was very active in participating" (Tom,

Table 8

Shifts in Thinking

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
Shift in thinking re: others	2	3	6	3	3	4	9
Shift in thinking re: HW/learning	1	2	5	1	4	2	3
Shift in thinking re: school				1		2	1
Shift in thinking re: CLE	1	1	1		1		1
Shift in thinking re: self	1	2					
Shift in thinking generic	1	1	1				1

Interview, 11/6/2017). The implication was that he felt differently about this student's participation levels prior to interacting with him in the CLE.

Shifts regarding homework. Members of all constituent groups reported leaving the CLE with new ideas and understandings of the topic of homework. This was a common code occurring in data from all interviews as well as the post-CLE CPR meeting and my memos. These shifts occurred in many ways. Some were broader, as in the case of a student who described the CLE experience as "eye-opening" because she "learned that there's a lot more factors to homework than we students think there are" (Sophie, Interview, 11/9/2017). Other shifts occurred in relation to more specific aspects of the homework topic, such as the teacher who commented that "it never occurred to me that [technology use] would be an area of frustration for parents. So that was kind of an a-ha moment for me" (Tom, Interview, 11/6/2017).

Shifts regarding school. Another type of thinking shift occurred in how participants view the school as a whole. All interviewees except the teacher referenced adjustments in how they view the school, particularly in how it interacts with various constituent groups. As an administrator put it, "including the community and all the players and the conversation about homework, symbolically that says something about the school" (Adam, Interview, 11/7/2017). A parent echoed this sentiment, saying, "actually I'm really surprised the school can hold this kind of unique event. Because when I walked in, I saw the principal in there and the teachers, counselors. Actually, I didn't expect this kind of event [would] have a lot of major school role people in there…. The school [must be] really concerned about the topic… and really care about the students, parents, and teachers" (Penny, Interview, 11/8/2017).

Illustrated in Figure 13, the data emerging about the process of CLEs is clear that participants learn from each other in beneficial ways. On the surface level, they noticed varied

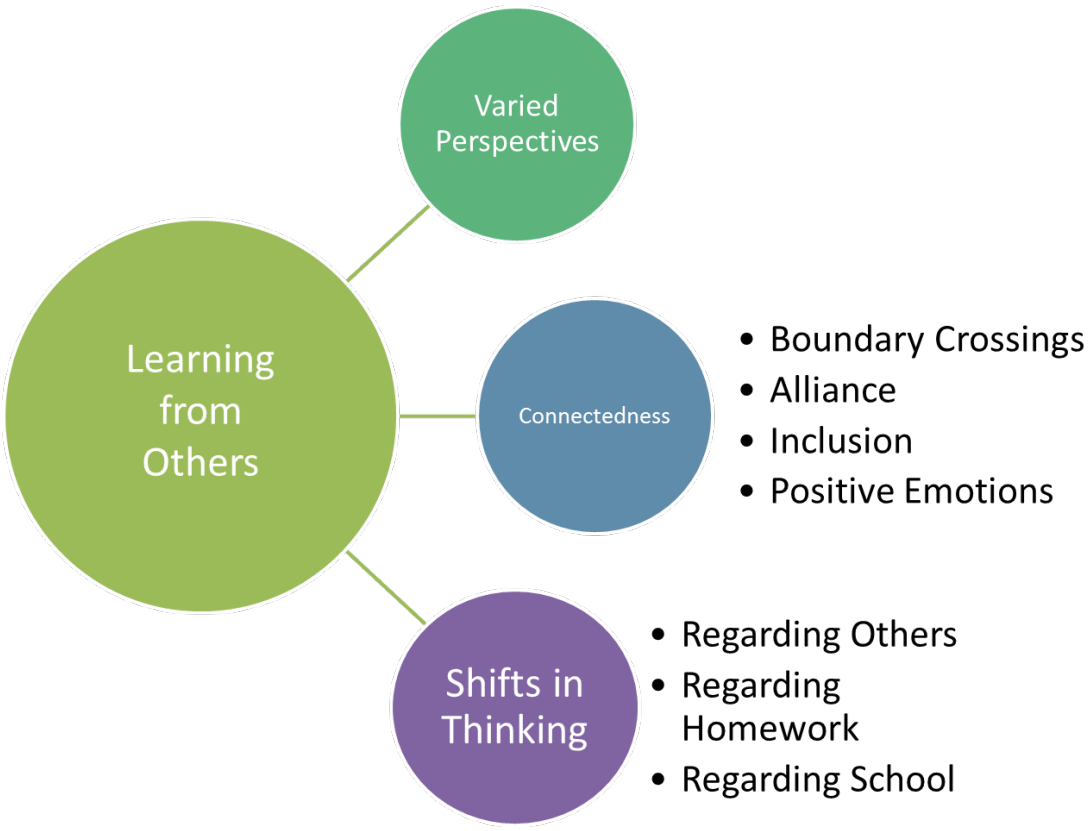

Figure 103. Learning from Others emerging theme.

perspectives both within and among different constituent groups. They also connected with others by crossing boundaries and developing alliances that lead to feelings of inclusion and positive emotions. Finally, they also experienced shifts in their thinking about the topic, others, and the school as a whole when they connected and shared perspectives with each other. While this theme is related to the process of CLEs, the next section explores the emerging themes related to the content of the CLE from PAR Cycle One.

Redefining Homework

CLEs are built on axioms described in Figure 14. These axioms are related to the process in which people interact with each other, but they are organized around a central topic or theme. As such, there are several themes that began to emerge related to the experience of homework at the school. Table 10 illustrates the themes as described by CLE participants during their mixed group discussions in the 4-square activity. The number following each theme denotes the number of groups who noted that as a theme, and the responses tended to cluster around a few specific sub-themes which I explore in the following section: balancing homework with tests as well as other activities, managing homework, technology use, and the quality of homework.

Balancing. One theme that emerged from the learning exchange evidence was a desire for balance in relation to homework – balancing the logistics of homework in terms of amount and scheduling and balancing for the purpose of ensuring that students can fully participate in other activities. The logistics included time and amount. Students indicated in responses that there was a discrepancy between the amount of time spent on homework from one night to the next, making it difficult to plan. In addition, the nature of teaching sometimes leads to tests and quizzes on the same day – near the end of a week or near the end of a term. While students understood there might be end-of-unit tests, they thought that teachers at middles school grades

Community Partnership Axioms
Learning and leadership are a dynamic social process
Conversations are critical and central pedagogies
The people closest to the issues are best suited to discover answers to local questions and problems
Crossing boundaries is how we learn and develop
Hope and change are built on the assets and dreams of locals and their communities

Figure 14. CLE axioms. Adapted from Guajardo et al., 2016.

Table 10

CLE Themes as Noted by Mixed Table Groups

Theme	Number of Mentions	Related Responses
Balance HW and tests	11	Preparing for tests should be HW – 2
		Planning for faculty to balance HW and tests – 3
		One test or quiz a day – 3
Balance HW & Physical Health	9	Balance between homework and other activities – 5
		Less time on HW – 2
		HW can get in way of sleep – 2
Homework Management	12	No HW on weekends – 8
		Students need to be able to plan ahead – 4
Use of Computer	8	Different subjects have different tech needs – 1
		Parents want less computer time – 4
		Students think computer is useful and necessary – 2
		Computer teaches discipline so less distracted in future – 1
Quality & Content of HW	19	Differentiated/Personalized HW with choice – 7
		More projects and collaborative options – 4
		Less repetition – 4
		Difficulty is disagreed upon – 3
		Grading - should it be graded or ungraded? – 1

could do a better job of balancing tests and quizzes throughout the week. As one group put it, "teachers could try to coordinate homework so that it is not overwhelming" (Table 4, CLE Document, 11/2/2017). Other groups mentioned that the test and quiz policy should be adjusted so that there would be no more than one assessment per day as "both cause stress and anxiety" (Table 5, CLE Document, 11/2/2017). The existing policy was that students can have no more than one test and one quiz in a single day, but students did not feel this policy is always being followed as they sometimes have multiple assessments in one day. While there is a mechanism in place for grade level English, math, history, and science teachers to plan the assessment calendar together, there is some disagreement about what "counts" as an assessment and teachers who teach multiple grade levels (world language, music, etc.) are not part of these meetings. Therefore, we need to see how that policy is actually working out in practice.

Secondly, it was universally noted that students had difficulty in balancing time for homework with other activities and protecting sleep. Several groups mentioned that homework can get in the way of other activities, and some specifically called for a reduction in the amount of homework that is assigned. Another sighting of this theme emerged in discussions about having more time for planning ahead. However, one group seemingly questioned the decisions that families make, writing that an a-ha moment for them was "overscheduling versus not having time for other activities" (Table 8, CLE document, 11/2/2017). A parent echoed this sentiment in the follow-up interview, stating that time management is both difficult and important at this school because "our school has a lot of activities and it's very good for the students to be involved. So, if they can save their time, they finish their homework, then they can join a lot of clubs" (Penny, Interview, 11/8/2017). The concept of balancing homework with other activities

emerged in the pilot CLE as well. Therefore, it was slated for further investigation during PAR Cycle Two.

Homework management. Continuing with the idea of balancing homework and other activities, several groups also mentioned that the management of homework during the week is an area for future focus. Nearly every mixed group mentioned the idea of not having homework on weekends as this was written on several affinity group posters during the gallery walk, and several mentioned a desire to know about homework farther in advance so that they could plan ahead. As one group wrote, "teachers should post homework on Canvas [online platform] so that students will know what homework is, so they can work ahead." The discussion about this topic continued after the CLE. In our CPR group meeting after the CLE, an administrator listed weekend homework as his number one takeaway, asking "is weekend homework more than the regular night?" (Alex, CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017). Similarly, a teacher came to me after the CLE and said she was talking with her department about how they could reduce the amount of homework on weekends (Memo, 11/4/2017).

Technology use. This is a school where each student has a laptop, and the use and management of technology was a source of some difference between affinity groups. Three out of the four student affinity groups mentioned technology in a positive way when answering the four questions on their 4-square. For example, one student group listed using computers under "What is going well with homework?" saying that the computers help them do homework "more efficiently." In contrast, one of the parent groups wrote that they wished the amount of time spent on the computer was different and asked for ways to help parents guide computer usage. In their discussions after the gallery walk, seven of the nine mixed groups pointed out that there was a difference between the students and parents; the students seemed to enjoy using

technology while the parents are concerned about it having a negative effect. Regarding computer management, one group posed the question "is it playing or is it work?" (Table 5, CLE document, 11/2/2017). This sentiment of management was echoed by an administrator during the post-CLE CPR meeting when she said "parents wanting less computer time, I think that's complicated. That's not just about homework" (Allison, CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017).

Quality vs. quantity of homework. A final overarching theme of the group discussions during the CLE was one of adjusting the quality of homework. Many groups mentioned that they would like more interesting and less repetitious homework. As mentioned by an administrator in an interview later, "everybody saw there was no real value in doing memorization and busy work" (Adam, Interview, 11/7/2017). The groups also noticed that many advocated for more choice in the homework they are assigned. Teacher and administrators tended to term this differentiated homework while parents and students called it personalized homework. One group mentioned that parents did not know this was an option. There were also some differences noted regarding the difficulty of homework as some groups said it was too easy while others said it was too hard.

Both the process theme of learning from others explored earlier as well as the content theme of redefining homework explained in this section provide evidence for the idea that this was a community ripe for change. The data showed that participants experienced shifts in thinking as a result of CLEs, and they also called for adjustments to current homework policies and procedures. In the next section, I explore this theme of ripeness for change more fully.

Ripeness for Change

In Chapter 3 describing the context of my PAR project, I listed "ripeness for change" as an asset for this community, citing new leadership and wellness initiatives aimed at improving

student experiences. This ripeness continued to surface as evidence amassed that there was support for making adjustments to policies and procedures based on the lessons learned during the CLE. In the interviews with participants as well as the follow-up CPR meeting and my memos regarding the discussions and activities occurring after the CLE, the evidence confirmed that the school was open to continuing to get feedback from all constituent groups, making policy and procedural changes based on the feedback, and utilizing CLEs as a mechanism for understanding the perspectives of constituent groups. In Table 11, we have evidence from interviews, memos, and the feedback from the CLE that feedback was welcome, that using the CLE format was useful, and that the school could bolster this effort through policy changes. In the following sections, I explore the themes of feedback, policy change, and future CLEs more fully.

Feedback. While feedback was not a code that occurred during the majority of interviews, the discussions about the CLE data during the CPR meeting frequently indicated that the group was responding to feedback, clarifying the reasoning behind policies and procedures, and asking more questions to get additional feedback. For example, during the CPR group discussion on concerns that were brought up, an administrator brought up the idea of repetitive homework. The group then discussed how that fit with differentiation, and the teacher clarified that she thought teachers were "given the instruction to not have optional homework because…it's never optional" (Tracy, CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017). We then asked how this would work for teachers if they needed to give different homework assignments to different students each day. In addition, memos and CPR group meetings also frequently showed evidence of openness to feedback.

Table 11

Ripeness for Change

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
Feedback: Request for	2		9	1	4		
Feedback: Open to	4		1				
Feedback: Clarify reasoning			5				
Feedback: Responsive to	1	1	9				
Feedback: call to share			4				
Feedback: to self	3						
Feedback: Sharing	3						
Policy change: Support for	2	1	5	1		4	2
Policy Change: Defense against	2		2				
Policy change: Openness to				1			
Policy change: Call for action			6	1			3
Policy Change: Movement toward	1				1		
CLE: Continued discussion	4		6	1	2	1	2

Table 11 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
CLE: Next		1	4		4	1	2
CLE: Recognizing Purpose	2	2	2		1		
CLE: Lori's project	1						
CLE: Value Process	2	7	9	5	2	3	5
CLE: Honoring wisdom	1	1	5	3			1
CLE: Power of place		1	1		1		
CLE: Familiar					1		
CLE: Unfamiliar							1
CLE: Misunderstanding	2						

Policy change. During interviews and conversations after the CLE, members of all constituent groups mentioned support for or movement towards changes in policy and procedures. This was especially true during the post-CLE CPR meeting when a large portion of the discussion was devoted to what would be done with the feedback received. During that meeting, we discussed the themes from Table 11 and how we would address the concerns. For example, we discussed the concept of weekend homework and an administrator suggested that "the first step is ensuring that the homework given on a Friday is no more than one regular night" (Alex, CPR Meeting, 11/13/2017). Similar sentiments came up in interviews, and a teacher shared that he was already thinking about how he would adjust his practices based on what he heard at the CLE. He said that he "started looking at some of the stuff we do, particularly in history class, with an eye to like, how do we 'choose your own adventure' this thing? And …we have some work that would lend itself to that well" (Tom, Interview, 11/6/2017).

Described in my memo from November 29, 2017, there were other movements towards policy and procedural changes that began to occur after the CLE. For example, soon after the CLE event, the principal announced during a faculty meeting that his major takeaway from the event was that weekend homework should be looked at, and he heard a student say he had four tests in one day, which is against our policy. He requested that teams of teachers look at what they are assigning and have discussions about what is best for students. Since that time, the administrator and counselor members of the CPR group met with the middle school administration team to share the full set of data from the exchange, and this information was also presented to the steering team made up of middle school leaders. It was also presented to the students who attended as well as being sent to parents who attended.

Future CLEs. During interviews and CPR meetings, members of all constituent groups talked about the value of the CLE process, and many talked about doing it again. Participants seemed to find the collaboration across boundaries to be beneficial. For example, a parent said, "this is wonderful [that] we can sit in the same table and discuss the same issue" (Penny, Interview, 11/8/2017) and all interviewees said they would participate again. Similarly, a teacher noted that he hoped it becomes a regular event because "setting up an event like of that nature, with like parents and teachers and students all talking to each other, like regardless of the subject, would be a useful thing to just kind of have rotating through the year" (Tom, Interview, 11/6/2017).

Implications

From the interactions during the Community Learning Exchange as well as the information gathered in interviews and informal conversations after the CLE, members of the school community are interested in continuing to hold CLEs. As I reflected on my research questions and theory of action, I started to see themes emerge that related to the questions I aimed to answer. Specifically, this section's headings relate to each of my research sub-questions: (a) to what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants? (b) how do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling? (c) to what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers? and (d) how does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices? The emerging themes of connectedness and inclusion are closely tied to the idea of equitable voice and honoring the wisdom of participants. In addition, the interactions between and among members of different affinity groups as well as the

shifts in thinking that were beginning to take shape helped to provide information about how conceptions were deepening and shifting. As people were beginning to understand the principles of CLEs and relate them to other things happening in the school, there was also support for and some movement towards this work being transferred into broader roles, but it was not clear the extent to which that might occur. Finally, I noted that as I continued to engage in this work, I would also continue to learn and see how this transformed my leadership practices.

Supporting Equitable Voice

One key takeaway from the CLE was the idea that more voices are needed in the decision-making process. Without us explicitly sharing the CLE axiom that "the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concern" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 25), members of all constituent groups came to the conclusion that understanding the perspectives of teachers, parents, and particularly students, is valuable. Often in schools, students are relegated to the types of tokenistic leadership that Mitra and colleagues (2014) warned against, decision-making about add-on activities such as dances, assemblies, and community service projects. However, when organizing the CLEs, the CPR group decided that the number of students should be equal to the number of adults rather than inviting an equal number of participants from each constituent group, and the results were quite positive. As indicated in the emerging themes described in the last section, the students reported feeling empowered and adults reported appreciating hearing student perspectives. In addition, our efforts to involve parents in the decision-making process exhibited several of the principles of successful school-family partnerships touted by experts in family involvement (Ferguson, 2008; Francis et al., 2016; Henderson & Mapp, 2002) as we sought to establish relationships, recognize and respect differences, and establish a partnership.

Conversations are Critical in Shifting Conceptions of Schooling

"To create change, there first needs to be a common understanding and language," (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 38). The axioms of learning exchanges were the guiding principles by which the CPR team and I set up the CLE experience. However, we were also seeing that the learning that occurred during the CLE brought it full circle and supported the axioms themselves. The data surrounding shifts in thinking supported the idea that when boundaries were crossed, and people spoke with individuals who were different from them, they left the interaction with a new understanding of another's perspective. In addition, these conversations seemed to connect to the idea that people arrive in learning environments with pre-conceptions that must be engaged in order to for learning to occur (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2001). During the CLEs, conversations among and between members of different affinity groups allowed for story-telling about personal experiences, which then led to new learning and shifts in thinking regarding the perspectives of others and ideas about homework.

Transferring to the Practices of Others

A key part of my research was answering the question of how this work transferred into the practices of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, and a key component of the literature on CLEs, parent engagement, and student voice is building relationships between members of different constituent groups (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2017; Cook-Sather, 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016). "Relationships are the heartbeat of reform" (Grubb & Tredway, 2016, p. 147) and a large part of this process has been building these collaborative relationships across power lines. During this cycle, there were "sightings" (McDonald, 1996) of connections to other efforts to build relationships, such as an increase in parent coffee discussions, adjustments to the

structure of homerooms in order to improve the student to teacher ratio, and the inclusion of parents and students on the school-wide wellness committee.

While more specific examples of explicit transfer of CLE principles were not yet visible, there was mounting evidence that people wanted to continue holding CLEs and that we were creating the conditions for these pedagogies and principles to be utilized more often. In the first cycle, we held one CLE and were still in the process of determining how to use the data about homework to improve practices and procedures within the middle school. However, as discussed in the last section, interviewees often mentioned things that could happen in the next CLE as well as ways that we could continue to hear the voices of students and parents more often. In the next cycle, I planned to look for more explicit examples of transfer.

Transforming My Own Leadership

Throughout PAR Cycle One, my ECU coaches asked me to reflect on my leadership. While I often reminded myself that I was not in a titled leadership role in my school and that I had administrators who held a great deal of power over what I did, I began to find that this work to include and empower the voices of others impacted my feelings of empowerment, led me to look for unheard voices more regularly, and caused me to reflect on and alter the way I interacted with colleagues and administrators.

Leading up to and during PAR Cycle One, I felt more empowered to share my voice. Similar to Cook-Sather's (2015) findings that teachers who participated in student voice initiatives saw their own capabilities differently as a result, I acted on instances when I felt that my voice needed to be included in certain conversations when I may not have done so a year ago. For example, I successfully advocated for membership on the Wellness Committee while also taking the lead in our cross-divisional counseling team. In addition, I was included in other

leadership committees such as a committee gathering evidence for school accreditation and the middle school scheduling committee.

As documented in memos, on each committee, I found myself looking around and wondering what voices were missing from those groups and how I could advocate for their inclusion while also being cautious not to overstep the bounds of my role within the school. I was trying to espouse the ideas of what Leverett (2002) termed an "equity warrior," someone who advocates for equitable outcomes, but also equitable representation in the decision-making process. For example, early in the accreditation process, I spoke with the deputy head of school to suggest that students be included on that committee. She agreed that it was a good idea, but ultimately it did not happen due to timing constraints. Instead, students were slated to participate in focus groups with the visiting accreditation team later in the school year.

During this cycle of inquiry, I realized that I was in the position of leading from the middle. Bushner, Hammersley-Fletcher, and Turner (2007) defined middle leaders as "people who hold middle-ranking posts in the hierarchy of a school, being neither senior leaders, such as principals or deputy headteachers, nor junior staff who are teachers, teaching assistants or clerical and site staff" (p. 405). Harris and Jones (2017) posited that the quality of this type of leadership "is heavily determined by the extent to which they have autonomy and responsibility to engage teachers in supportive and innovative ways" (p. 215). In addition, Harris and Jones (2017) affirmed that this type of leadership is particularly challenging due to the pressure exerted from both sides. I have administrators who oversee my work but who are open to and sometimes rely on my input, and I also have the task of influencing the work of my colleagues who have opinions of their own. I was learning that in order to manage this position appropriately, I need to flex different leadership muscles at different times. With colleagues, I need to continue to

collaborate in order to establish a community where we seek and act as what Little (2006) termed "critical friends" (p. 1,034). In addition, when leading and mentoring other adults, I need to be mindful of what Knowles termed "ways of knowing" and work with and support their growth based on where they are rather than where I think they should be (Drago-Severson, 2009). With my administrators, I need to continue providing data about the work that I'm doing, but in order for it to be most effective, they need to have it as quickly as possible. In the next cycle of research, I continued to explore ways to best lead from the middle.

Connection to Framework

The emerging data seemed to fit the framework I created after reviewing the literature (see Figure 9 in Chapter 2). The CPR group and I successfully brought together a group of people who come from different cultural backgrounds and positions within the school. While participants noticed and commented on variations in perspectives based on positionality, none mentioned the ways in which cultural and educational backgrounds impacted the perspectives of individuals. I believe that this is related to the fact that we explicitly split participants into affinity groups rather than groups based on cultural backgrounds and did not ask questions that required participants to consider the ways in which their cultural experiences impacted their answers. This was a consideration as I moved into PAR Cycle Two of the research.

The groups then engaged in inquiry and dialogue using CLE pedagogies that were also closely related to global thinking dispositions. Through these conversations in affinity groups and mixed groups, collaborative relationships began forming, as evidenced by the connectedness codes showing feelings of inclusion and alliances across different members of the school community. Finally, evidence started to emerge that the group had a common goal of improving the homework experience for students and that there was a desire for practices and policies to

shift in order to meet that goal. It still remained to be seen whether those changes would actually happen and result in improvements for our diverse set of students.

Looking Forward to PAR Cycle Two

In summary, during PAR Cycle One, the evidence mounted that the process whereby the CPR group and I worked in concert to plan the CLE created the conditions for participants to have meaningful conversations that allowed for increased understanding of variations in perspectives, increased connections to others, and led to shifts in thinking about others, homework, and the school. In addition, participants left the CLE with a better understanding of how homework functions within the school and what issues needed to be addressed. During PAR Cycle One, there was some movement towards policy and procedural change, but no official changes had taken place.

An important part of iterative research is to review and refine the plans from one cycle to the next. Therefore, as I looked forward to Cycle Two, the CPR group and I planned to continue to meet and plan a second CLE that would further address my first research question on equity of voice and continue the homework conversations begun in PAR Cycle One. However, we also planned to turn attention to how the lessons learned during the CLEs influenced practices and policies related to homework as well as towards how CLE principles influenced the practices of individuals. In addition, I planned to refine the research codes and further examine my middle-level leadership.

Policy and Procedural Changes

CLEs are built on inquiry and action, meaning that the conversations lead to some sort of action or change. In order to address my research question on how conversations deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling, I planned to look for evidence of shifts in

thinking and perceptions, but also for changes in policies and procedures that occurred as a result of the learning and conversations that take place in the context of CLEs. At the end of PAR Cycle One, there had already been some discussion about changes to homework policies and procedures, I planned to look for evidence of what those changes were and how they would be put into practice.

Refining Research Codes

In PAR Cycle One, I coded data using an inductive style, and I ended the cycle with nearly 100 codes in total. While this style of coding helped me to decipher the emerging themes, there were many codes that seemed to overlap and connect to each other in some way. Therefore, during PAR Cycle Two, I planned to look for ways to refine and collapse some of the codes that emerged during PAR Cycle One. I anticipated that as I collected and analyzed data during PAR Cycle Two I would expand my understanding of the emerging themes and their nuances, thus allowing me to refine my codebook.

Leading from the Middle

In PAR Cycle One I recognized my middle leadership role, meaning that I was leading and being seen as a leader to some extent, but I did not have a true position of titled power and therefore must lead by influence and collaboration more than more traditional top-down strategies. Therefore, in PAR Cycle Two I planned to investigate how I embodied this role as well as research best practices for middle leaders. I continued to document my learning through memos, and my practices were documented in the CPR meeting notes as I continued to investigate my final research question on how engagement in this work transforms my own leadership. I also continued to obtain feedback from my administrators and ECU coaches.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the process, emerging themes, and implications of the findings of PAR Cycle One. I shared the process through which the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group and I began our work together and planned and facilitated the Community Learning Exchange (CLE). I then explored the themes of learning from others, redefining homework, and ripeness of change that emerged through analysis of the data from memos, CPR group meetings, CLE documents, and post-CLE interviews. The data and emerging themes held implications for each of my research questions and helped to refine the plan for PAR Cycle Two. In the next chapter, I outline the process and findings that emerged from PAR Cycle Two.

CHAPTER 6: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE TWO

Introduction

The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) project was to increase equitable voice among all school constituents and thereby better serve a culturally diverse student and family population. During PAR Cycle Two, I continued to utilize the methodology of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) to bring diverse voices together for discussion in equitable ways. In this chapter, I first describe my key leadership activities, including the process through which the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group and I used knowledge gained in PAR Cycle One to plan a CLE and analyze the resulting data. I then explore the themes related to learning from others and movement towards change that presented as a result of data analysis. Next, I share how the emerging data connect to my research questions and the findings of others, and then I examine our dilemma with homework through an organizational lens. Finally, I share the implications of this work on my role as a leader as well as how the findings from this cycle informed the plan for PAR Cycle Three.

Key Leadership Activities

PAR Cycle Two occurred during one academic semester (Spring 2018) and included several activities related to the CLE event held in March 2018 as well as other leadership activities related to reform within the school. During this cycle, I continued my work with the CPR group as we collectively met to plan and organize the CLE. While the CLE itself was a key event and included several constructivist elements designed to encourage inquiry and dialogue about homework between and among members of different constituent groups, I participated in several other groups aimed at reform at the school level and documented my leadership growth. As well, I noted sightings of connections between the CLE practices and other initiatives in the

school as I chronicled meetings and conversations. I kept personal memos and dialogued with members of all constituent groups throughout the semester (parents, students, counselors, teachers, and administrators). After the CLE, I conducted follow-up interviews with one parent, one teacher, one administrator, and three students. Finally, the CPR group met at the end of the semester to reflect on the CLE and how to move this work forward.

In this section, I provide a detailed account of the activities as well as data collection and analysis that took place in the second PAR cycle. These details provide a vivid account of what was done to set the stage for the subsequent emergent themes that were generated from interviews, memos, CPR group meetings, and the CLE discussions, four-squares, and closing circle.

Continuing the CPR Group: Planning and Implementation

Re-confirmation of group. After completing PAR Cycle One of research as well as the first semester of the school year, I checked in and affirmed with each member of the CPR team that he or she wanted to continue in their role. In addition, the suggestion was made to include another student on the team, so we extended an invitation to Steven, a seventh-grade student who attended the Cycle One CLE, and he accepted. Therefore, PAR Cycle Two continued with seven members on the CPR team: one administrator, two counselors, one parent, one teacher, and two students.

CPR Meetings. During the course of PAR Cycle Two, the CPR team met five times with the tasks of reviewing themes and lessons learned from the Cycle One CLE, planning and facilitating the Cycle Two CLE, and determining the next steps after that CLE. During these meetings, we continued the tradition of using opening and closing circles during each meeting as well as utilizing various CLE pedagogies during the meetings. In addition, we sought to

strengthen relationships and trust within the group while also welcoming and including Steven in the group. Therefore, we spent a good deal of time revisiting the CLE axioms and protocols as well as rehashing the progress already achieved during Cycle One. This served as a catalyst for discussions about next steps and the direction in which we wanted to take the Cycle Two CLE.

In planning the Cycle Two CLE, the CPR team needed to determine participants and determine content and pedagogy. As a group, we determined that we wanted to maintain the same size of the Cycle One CLE, but that we wanted the CLE to delve deeper into the themes found in the first CLE. After reviewing these themes together in the first meeting, each member discussed them with others prior to the next meeting. We then shared what we learned from those conversations, reviewed the current homework policy, and determined which areas needed more discussion. We also reviewed the agenda and pedagogies from the Cycle One CLE, determining that the format would continue to work well for our Cycle Two goals; however, in addition to altering the questions for the four-square activity, we would need to adjust to a different pedagogy for the first story-telling activity. The pedagogies ultimately chosen are included in the next section outlining the CLE activities.

Because we wanted to build on the discussions from the Cycle One CLE, the decision was quickly made to invite the same participants and then find replacements for anyone who was unable to attend. Once again, care was taken to ensure that the 25 student participants and 12 parent participants represented our diverse and eclectic population, varying by cultural and educational background, academic achievement, and involvement in school activities. In addition, we added the Information Technology Coordinator to the administrator/counselor group of six as another person in a “big picture” role. We took care to include a performing arts teacher and an academic support teacher in the teacher participant group, rounding out the group

of 12 teachers from different cultural and educational backgrounds, varying lengths of stay at the school, and various roles and departments within the school.

Community Learning Exchange (CLE)

In March 2018, 54 students, parents, teachers, and administrators gathered to continue the discussion on the topic of homework (see Participants, Appendix J, for details). CPR group members greeted participants and directed them to their assigned tables, each consisting of six members of their affinity group. The two-hour event was introduced by the middle school principal, and then I acknowledged both new and returning participants and shared the anticipated outcomes and essential agreements (see Agenda, Appendix K, for details).

Using a constructivist process that was familiar to returning participants, individuals shared experiences and perspectives with a peer or peers in their affinity group, then co-constructed meaning with a larger affinity group, and finally shared our group sense-making with others outside our affinity groups. This process of working first with affinity group members and then moving into conversations with others outside out affinity groups happened twice. The first round was a story-telling activity where we shared early memories of schooling, and the second round was a 4-square activity delving into themes surrounding homework established in the previous CLE. The final activity of the CLE was a circle with all participants.

Storytelling. After I introduced the event, Alex, the associate principal, facilitated the first activity in which participants reflected on their early memories of school. The prompt was: "Draw or write about one of your earliest memories of school. What were you doing? Who was there? What happened? How were you feeling?" Alex modeled by sharing a memory, and then participants individually drew or wrote about their memory on a sheet of paper. They then shared their memory with a partner at their table. After both partners shared their memories, the table

groups came back together, and each participant introduced his or her partner, providing a one-sentence summary of his or her memory. Then the group analyzed the memories, discussing and recording the similarities and differences. Captured in Figure 15, all participants then stood up and shared the themes from their discussion with someone from another table. We then rotated to share with a second person from another table before sitting back down and doing a group share of our findings.

Four-square. I then facilitated the next round of activities. Still in affinity groups at tables, participants completed a chart answering four questions about homework that were related to common questions from the Cycle One CLE: How should homework balance with other activities? How could we personalize homework and still have students learn the same content? What would ideal homework be like? and How should homework be graded? Once completed, these charts provided information for participants to conduct a gallery walk, individually reading each poster and taking notes of themes, similarities and differences, and "a-ha" moments (see Figure 16).

After viewing all posters, participants moved to a new table with a mix of students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Each new mixed group then shared their thoughts and reactions while creating a master list of themes, similarities and differences, and a-has. After discussing in smaller mixed groups, groups reported out, sharing the themes and discussion points.

Closing circle. Steven, a student CPR group member, facilitated the closing activity. All participants moved into an open section of the room and stood in a large circle. Beginning with himself as a model, Steven led the group to share a word or phrase describing their takeaway

Figure 15. Discussing story themes.

Figure 16. Gallery walk.

from the CLE, and then I closed the CLE with words of thanks and looking towards the future, saying that the CPR team will collect the data from the CLE and determine next steps.

Other Leadership Activities

Throughout PAR Cycle Two, I cataloged formal meetings and informal discussions either directly or indirectly related to the topic of homework. I am on the leadership team of the school-wide wellness committee, and during this cycle, I also participated in several committees related to curriculum change within the middle school, including math, Mandarin, and health. In addition, I also participated in the middle school scheduling committee and a task force asked to review homework weighting.

I also cataloged leadership activities that were unrelated to homework in order to analyze my own leadership growth. In addition to the routine tasks I complete as a counselor and middle leader, I also kept track of situations in which I was consulted by others or where I needed to view the situation through the lens of my own leadership.

Data Collection and Analysis

I collected and analyzed several forms of data during PAR Cycle Two. First, throughout PAR Cycle Two, I wrote memos to myself. These memos were recordings of my thoughts after meetings or discussions with others about my research, and they served as a running record of my meaning-making process while experiencing PAR Cycle Two as well as linking my leadership practices to theories I was learning in my graduate school courses.

The CLE also provided multiple pieces of evidence, including the tables of similarities and differences between stories, affinity group four-squares, and the mixed group lists of themes. The CPR group meeting agendas and notes, as well as the transcript from the final meeting after the CLE, also provided data. I also interviewed one participant from each of the adult constituent

groups and three student participants. After transcribing the interviews and CPR group meeting, I deductively coded the data using the codes I created in Cycle One. Each time a code appeared, I placed a tick mark in my data table based on where the code appeared. After this first round of coding, I went back through the data again, this time inductively looking for codes that may not have been present in the initial codebook. As I completed this second round of coding, I also consolidated and adjusted the codes as themes continued to develop and crystalize.

Learning that Leads to Change

The data in PAR Cycle Two continued to support the findings in PAR Cycle One that Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) are meaningful for participants, both as a process of learning from others and as a way to better understand our chosen topic of homework. As a result of their participation in CLEs, members of each constituent group honored and understood the perspectives of others while also feeling their own wisdom was honored, expressed feelings of connection to others and inclusion in the decision-making process, and experienced shifts in their thinking. In addition, within the school as a whole, there was support for and movement towards change in philosophy, policy, and practice. These emerging themes are illustrated in Figure 17 and described more fully in the following sections.

Learning from Others

During PAR Cycle Two, data continued to emerge supporting the conclusion that the CLE process set the stage for positive and meaningful interactions with others that led to the understanding of different perspectives, new ideas, connections with others, and an eye towards the future. In the closing circle of the CLE, participants were asked to share a word or phrase describing their takeaway message from the CLE. As shown in Table 12, their responses fell into similar categories as PAR Cycle One. In addition, similar themes have also been borne out in

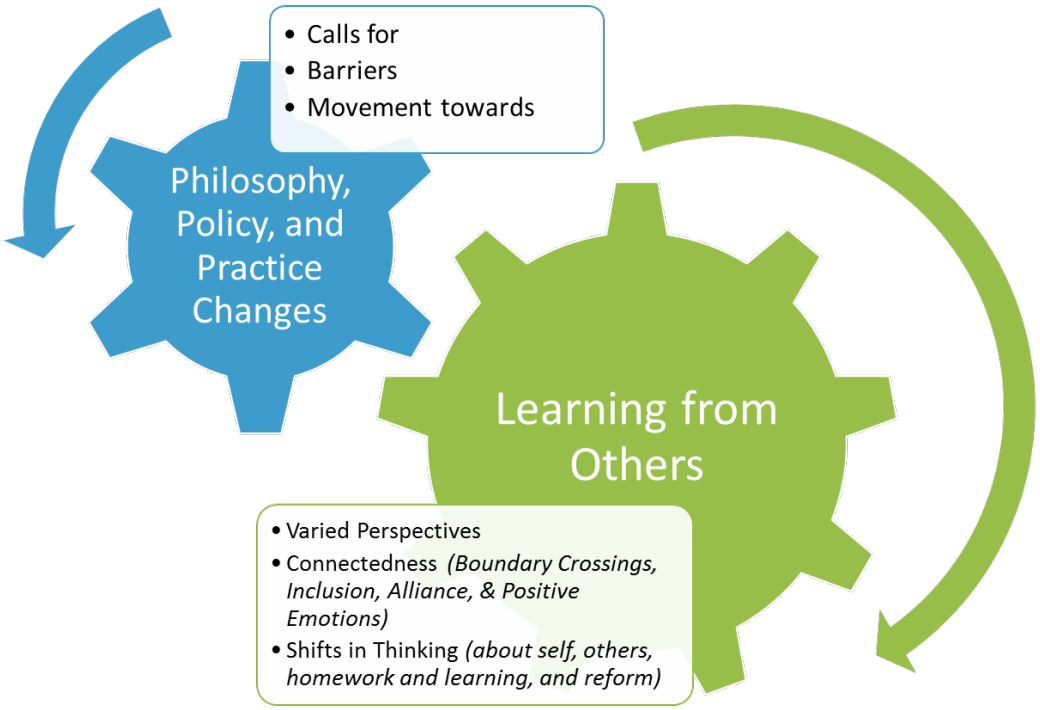

Figure 17. PAR Cycle Two themes.

Table 12

Themes of Closing Circle Words/Phrases Describing the PAR Cycle Two CLE Experience

Theme	Answer – Number of Times Shared
Different perspectives	Ideas are debatable – 8 Differing points of view – 9
Connections	Common ground – 1 Stories – 1 Together – 1
Movement/Future	Forward motion – 4 Hopeful – 1 Success – 2 More [CLEs/discussion]– 4
New Ideas	Ponder – 2 Informative – 6 Question – 1 Meaning – 1
Positive	Exciting – 5 Constructive – 1 Valuable – 1 Proud – 1 Open – 1 Reduce Stress – 1

CPR meetings and the interviews conducted after the CLEs. Participants acknowledged the diverse and varied perspectives of others, felt connected and aligned with others, and experienced shifts in their thinking about the topic and others.

Varied perspectives. An anticipated outcome of the CLE was again for participants to understand diverse perspectives, and the data emerging from PAR Cycle Two further support the conclusion from PAR Cycle One that participants' abilities to do this were strengthened. Not only did participants acknowledge variations in perspectives, but they also reported these variations as valuable, expressed the points of view of others, and called for increases in voice. This evidence of deepening understandings of diverse perspectives occurred both during and after the CLE, as described in the following sections.

Acknowledgment of diverse perspectives was the most common response during the closing circle of the CLE, and as demonstrated in Table 13, many people both noticed and valued the variations of perspectives. One student compared the variety of perspectives he is used to hearing in his everyday life to what he experienced during the CLE, saying it "was really valuable to me is that I finally got to hear the opinions of other people. Usually, I'm talking to other students about homework…. This time I got to see from administrators, teachers, parents, so it really broadens my view. So, I think that was really valuable to me" (Scott, Interview, 3/15/2018). As an administrator put it, "it's good to hear too, not just my own views or…views from people I want to talk to. But it's good to hear it from other people, from teachers, and from students, and parents" (Alan, Interview, 3/21/2018). At the same time, participants also noticed that the variations in perspectives did not fall along affinity group lines. For example, one student shared that he did not expect other students to have a different opinion than he did, saying that "I think a

Table 13

Varied Perspectives

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Student
Varied Perspectives: noticed	3		3	1	2	1	3
Varied Perspectives: valuable	3		3	1		2	3
Varied Perspectives: within affinity group	1	2	1		3	1	1
Varied Perspectives re: sleep			1			1	
Varied Perspectives re: homework		1	2	1	1	2	2
Varied Perspectives re: tech					1		
PoV: Self		2	1	1	2	7	3
PoV: Other	2			3	3	5	5
PoV: Affinity group		1	1	1	3	1	1
PoV: Big Picture	4		3		1	3	1
PoV: Expert	3		1			1	
Voice: Call for increase	2	1	2	2		1	
Voice: Positive	2	1	1	2	2	1	

Table 13 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Student
Voice: unique		1	1		1	1	
Voice: lack of equity	1		3		1		

lot of people thought [homework] shouldn't be graded but some students thought it would so that surprised me" (Saul, Interview, 3/15/2018).

In addition, many participants also verbalized the points of view of others, and/or acknowledged that the point of view they expressed was theirs alone. These data continued to provide evidence for the conclusion that participants were able to both understand and express the views of others in multiple settings. For example, a parent recounted her understanding of the student perspective on academic competition, saying "they also felt the pressure of not being…in the lowest level [of math] because I think they feel that their friends may be laughing at them.… so they felt like [they] really have to make sure [they] don't fall behind" (Peggy, Interview, 3/16/2018).

Finally, there were a few instances where participants paid attention to the voices being shared. Several people called for an increase in the voices shared while others commented that it was a positive experience to hear from a certain other affinity group. For example, an administrator said that "it's good for the kids and parents to be able to have a say" (Alan, Interview, 3/21/18). A few also felt they brought a unique perspective to the group, such as a CPR group member who shared that she is "glad my localness helps" (Paula, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018). However, others also noticed that there was a lack of equity in those who were sharing voices, even within the CLE. A teacher noted that even within the teacher group, "sometimes you have people who dominate a conversation…and not really listening to each other" (Tina, Interview, 3/16/2018). Despite this comment illustrating someone not adhering to the anticipated outcome of understanding diverse perspectives, at the same time it is an example of another participant noticing a lack of equity and seeing value in hearing multiple voices and perspectives.

Outside of CLEs, I also noticed several instances in which people began to notice and call for varied perspectives in other meetings and conversations. For example, my memos include accounts of several meetings in which effort was made to include and understand varied perspectives. One such occasion was a series of meetings with the middle school math department whose department chair also attended both the Cycle One and Cycle Two CLEs (Memo, 1/28/2018). In discussing potential changes to curriculum and course offerings, the math department sought the perspectives of both lower and upper school counterparts as well as curriculum experts, administrators, a college counselor, and the middle school counselors who understand the student perspective. The Director of Pedagogy opened this meeting by "talking about wanting to do the right thing for kids and make our program better, and how we know these conversations can't take place all the time, but they're really important to have" (Memo, 1/28/2018). After this meeting, I reflected that "it was great to see leadership from all 3 divisions as well as [the Director of Pedagogy] and [the Deputy Head of School] in the room discussing how we articulate our K-12 philosophy. Afterward, [the Deputy Head of School] talked to me and said it was really helpful to have me in the room as well" (Memo, 1/28/2018). On another occasion, the KA-12 counseling team talked about the need to talk with parents and students about the experiences and needs of the various types of cross-cultural individuals (CCIs) at the school. I memoed about this event, saying that "we do things differently than local schools, and by the very nature of coming to this school, children's experiences will be culturally different than their parents. We need to talk with them about this in the admissions process and beyond" (Memo, 3/8/2018). I also saw evidence of an increase in voice in a voluntary teacher professional development session on culturally-sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) where we also discussed the work of Freire (2000). Faculty from each division of the school attended this session,

including teachers from many disciplines, department chairs, and administrators, and among other things, we discussed grading students in a Freirian system so as not to be reinforcing the norms of the oppressors. This was not a group that normally interacted as part of everyday school operations, and the variety of voices within the room calling for more student voice in teaching practices was uplifting (Memo, 2/21/2018).

All in all, PAR Cycle Two included sightings of increases in the voices in various arenas within the school as well as calls for the sharing of more voices, valuing of various perspectives, and expression of other points of view. Taken together, these data support the CLE axiom that conversations are critical and central pedagogies that lead to change (Guajardo, et. al, 2016). In the next section, I turn to the feelings of connectedness that emerged during this cycle.

Connectedness. In addition to noticing and seeking to understand the diverse perspectives of others, further evidence emerged to support the developing theme from PAR Cycle One that CLEs and CLE pedagogies are valuable due to the feelings of connectedness they foster. These connections arose through positive feelings towards the CLE process that enabled participants to cross boundaries and engage with others. In addition, several participants discussed feelings of being included in the decision-making process and alliance with others who were different from them. Throughout this cycle, I also noted times that these feelings of connectedness occurred in other meetings and conversations. Table 14 illustrates these four key themes of positive emotions, boundary crossings, inclusion, and alliance.

Positive emotions. Throughout PAR Cycle Two, CPR team members, participants, and I continued to express positive emotions four times more often than negative emotions when discussing the CLE process, as represented in Table 14. Coupled with the fact that the majority of the PAR Cycle One participants agreed to return for a second CLE, this provided additional

Table 149

Connectedness Themes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
Boundary Crossing: connection	5	8	3			1	
Boundary Crossing: Across power lines	3	2	1	1	1	2	5
Boundary Crossing: Across cultures						3	
Boundary Crossing: Learning/Unity	3		2			2	
Boundary Crossing: different philosophies	1					1	
Inclusion: need for	5		1	3		2	1
Inclusion: feeling	1	2			2	1	1
Inclusion: Effort to	1		2	1		1	
Inclusion: Barrier to							
Inclusion: desire					1	2	2
Alliance: Need for	2				1		
Alliance: Achieved	8	1	1	1	1	3	5
Alliance: Partial/Separated groups	1			1			

Table 14 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
Alliance: Absent							
Emotions, Positive: Supported	2	3	1				
Emotions, Positive: Empowered	1					1	1
Emotions, Positive: Enjoyment	2	1			1	2	1
Emotions, Positive: success	5						1
Emotions, Positive: Hope	2		1	1			
Emotions, Positive: Excitement	1			1			1
Emotions, Positive: Comfort/Familiarity	3		2	1		1	3
Emotions, Positive: Appreciation	3		1			1	
Emotions, Positive: Pleasant surprise		1	1		1		
Emotions, Positive: Acceptance	1						
Emotions, Positive: Relief	1					1	
Emotions, Positive: Validated						1	1
Emotions, Positive: Honored		5			2	1	1

Table 14 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Students
Emotions, Negative: Worry	3						
Emotions, Negative: Second Guessing				1		2	
Emotions, Negative: Disappointment						2	
Emotions, Negative: Hesitant	1		1				
Emotions, Negative: Uncomfortable						1	
Emotions, Negative: Frustration	2				1		

support to the conclusion from PAR Cycle One that participants had enduring positive reactions to the event. As a teacher put it, "I think I had a good first experience talking about it, and I was curious to see what would happen the second time around…. And then it's always a good time" (Tina, Interview, 3/16/2018). A student echoed this sentiment, saying that "it was really fun to hear…what everyone had to say" (Stacy, Interview, 3/15/2018).

As the CPR group and I worked to create Gracious Space (Hughes & Grace, 2010) both in our planning meetings and in the CLE itself, we noticed that the comfort level increased, and we hypothesized that this helped stimulate conversation. For example, in our follow-up meeting after the CLE, I noted that "there was a lot more laughter and just sort of automatically diving in and having conversations with other people" (Lori, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018). A student echoed this sentiment, saying that he did not hold anything back during the CLE and that he was able to "talk the normal way I would" (Saul, Interview, 3/15/2018). It stands to reason that these positive emotions made it possible for participants to cross boundaries and truly engage in dialogue with others, as discussed in the next section.

Boundary crossings. During interviews and discussions after the CLE, members of all constituent groups referenced times when they crossed existing boundary lines to engage in dialogue with others they would not normally interact with in this way. As noted in Table 14, participants and I referenced these boundary crossings in interviews, memos, and meetings after the CLE, indicating that they were meaningful and memorable. In some cases, these boundaries were specifically noted as cultural, in others they were across power lines (e.g. teachers and students), and in other situations, they were with others who held different philosophical beliefs. For example, a student discussed how crossing power lines and talking with adults led her to think about homework differently and see another point of view, saying that "when talking with

an adult, and staff and stuff, to know that homework is important, so you can switch perspectives and understand both" (Stacy, Interview, 3/16/2018). In another instance, a parent referenced a boundary crossing with a friend who held a different philosophy, saying that she decided to broach the topic of homework in a conversation after her CLE experience. She explained, "I shared with one mom, and she was…kind of puzzled because I was asking for, I was rooting for no homework. She was very intently listening to me, [wondering] why I would think in such a way…. I was almost like a salesman because I knew that wasn't on their mind" (Peggy, Interview, 3/16/2018). Finally, a student CPR team member spoke about her experience interacting with the CPR team, saying "I would never know what you guys feel about homework and just the student side. So this has been really informative" (Sarah, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018). Separate from the CLE, I also noted boundary crossings that occurred in other meetings. For example, after the voluntary meeting about culturally-sustaining pedagogy in which I interacted with faculty from across the school, I memoed about the connections I made with this group, saying that "it was a good discussion and …it was great to see who the like-minded folks are in the school. We talked about setting up a more regular discussion time to continue the conversation. It was really uplifting!" (Memo, 2/21/2018). Taken together, these connections across traditional boundaries of power, culture, and work setting, are valuable not only because they increased the level of understanding between different individuals and excite the curiosity of learners (Guajardo et al., 2016), but also because they increasingly created feelings of inclusion and alliance, as discussed in the next sections.

Inclusion and honoring wisdom. In addition to crossing boundaries to dialogue with others, participants and I also continued to reference feelings of our wisdom being honored and inclusion in the decision-making process. Highlighted in Table 14, CLE participants noted not

only a desire to have their voice included in important conversations but also feeling included and honored as a result of their participation. For example, when reflecting on her involvement in the CLE, a student shared she "thought it would be a good opportunity, so I would do it. And I'm happy I did it" (Stacy, Interview, 3/16/2018). A parent also approached me after the CLE, saying that she had a hard time getting there because she works over an hour away, but she made it a priority because she appreciated being asked to participate and share her opinions (Memo, 3/12/2018). The administrator interviewed did not express feelings of inclusion for himself, but this could be due to the fact that he holds the power to make decisions for the school. However, in several instances, he talked about the importance of including the wisdom of others, as well as his own efforts to do so. Philosophically, he said "I don't want to give all the answers all the time. I don't know all the answers. They know some more than me" (Alan, Interview, 3/21/2018).

The need to include diverse voices in the decision-making process was often on my mind as I attended meetings and went about my daily tasks during PAR Cycle Two. My memos often reflected these thoughts as I noticed successes but also grappled with my role in bringing a more diverse group into these meetings. For example, I successfully advocated for my own inclusion in two groups focused on curriculum change, one for math and the other for Mandarin. For both teams, the changes were the result of student and parent feedback. While I appreciated being included to remind the group of the "big picture" and help us remain student-centered, I worried that there was no mechanism in place to ensure that the changes being made actually met the expressed needs of the students. In the memo following this meeting, I noted that "I don't think that every single decision should be made by group consensus, but I also think that we need to bring students and parents into the conversations more and more so that we understand their

perspectives when making decisions. Besides events like CLEs, when and how can I help make those happen?" (Memo, 1/28/2018). As a whole, these feelings of inclusion, as well as efforts to increase the inclusion of others, continue to impact the way we make decisions within the school as more perspectives are brought into the reform process.

Alliance. Beyond feeling included, another important theme that continued to emerge during PAR Cycle Two was one of alliance or working together towards a goal. This came through in post-CLE interviews with members of all constituent groups as well as during CPR team meetings and my memos regarding other activities. For example, a parent expressed appreciation for the mixed group discussion during the CLE, because they quickly bonded to achieve their task, saying that as a group, their thinking was "OK, what do we want to improve?" (Peggy, Interview, 3/16/2018).

Beyond the CLEs, alliances continued to emerge in other areas. During PAR Cycle Two, I noted an increase in alliance within the CPR group as other members of the group volunteered to lead activities during and outside of the CLE. For example, all CPR group members volunteered to discuss homework with others both in and out of their affinity groups in order to gather opinions and information on changes that had already occurred (CPR Meeting, 1/29/2018). Steven, the youngest and newest member of the CPR group, also volunteered to lead the closing circle of the Cycle Two CLE (CPR Meeting, 2/23/2018). In addition, I had sightings of other areas in which alliances were forming across boundaries. For example, I attended an In-House Institute session during which faculty from a wide range of disciplines discussed the work of Freire (2000) as well as Paris' (2012) description of culturally-sustaining pedagogy. Together, we unpacked the terms, discussed how they show up in our different roles within the school, and

left with a collective understanding of the importance of appreciating the perspectives and learning orientations of all students, not just those from the dominant culture (Memo, 2/21/2018).

During this cycle, the emerging theme of connectedness was overwhelmingly evident not only during and after the CLE, but it was also beginning to emerge in other areas as we included more voices and perspectives. felt positively about their inclusion as well as their learning as they crossed boundaries to learn from, and sometimes align with, others. As discussed in the next section, these connections began to lead to shifts in thinking for members of all constituent groups.

Shifts in thinking. During PAR Cycle Two, the evidence continued to mount that engaging with others in ways that honor the wisdom of all parties leads to shifts in thinking, as is one of the CLE axioms – listening to the wisdom of the people closest to the work or issue (Guajardo et al., 2016). As reported earlier in Table 12, many participants talked about new ideas or ways of thinking when asked about their takeaway message from the CLE. In addition, members of all constituent groups discussed shifts in their thinking after participating in the CLEs, members of the CPR group and I experienced shifts in our thinking as a result of engaging in this work, and sightings of other shifts in thinking also appeared in other conversations and meetings that I attended during PAR Cycle Two. Table 15 delineates these shifts that occurred in relation to homework and learning as well as in relation to self, others, and the reform process, and I explore each of type of shift in thinking in the following sub-sections.

Shifts regarding homework and learning. Members of all constituent groups reported shifts in their thinking about homework and learning as a result of their participation in the CLE. These shifts occurred in multiple ways. Some were specific to one part of homework or learning, such as an administrator who talked about weekend homework loads, saying “that was one thing

Table 1510

Shifts in Thinking

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Student
Shift in thinking re: CLE		1					
Shift in thinking re: self	1				1		1
Shift in thinking re: others	2		3	1	2	4	2
Shift in thinking re: HW/learning	3		2	2	4	2	4
Shift in thinking re: reform	2		2				
Shift in thinking generic			2			1	3
Shift in thinking re: school	2						

I think I underestimated, and it's made me think about that, what we can be doing in that aspect" (Alan, Interview, 3/21/2018). Other shifts were more philosophical in nature as they related to homework and its connection to learning. For example, a parent reported that "in the beginning, I wanted zero homework. But after speaking with others and reading the sheets that were posted on the wall and sharing ideas with everyone, I went from no homework to maybe some homework…because it's part of training the child to do time management" (Peggy, Interview, 3/16/2018).

Shifts regarding others. Another common type of thinking shift that continued to occur for members of all constituent groups was a change in attitude or beliefs about others. These beliefs shifted, either with a new understanding of where another person or group of people was coming from, or with a different opinion about specific people. A student commented that he thought teachers only cared about students getting their work done, saying that "what surprised me probably the most about [the CLE] was that the teachers do care about how much time you spend with your family" (Scott, Interview, 3/15/2018). Similarly, a teacher spoke with me after the CLE, noting a shift in her thinking about the perspectives of her colleagues. As an academic support teacher as well as a middle school parent, she often sits with students as they complete homework. She shared that she originally thought her colleagues were simply prioritizing the work they assign, but she realized that many teachers had never seen homework from a student point of view, meaning they were unaware rather than ignoring the difficulties students faced in managing it all (Memo, 3/14/2018).

Shifts regarding self. Another shift in thinking that presented itself a few times was that of looking at oneself in a different way. One such shift occurred for a teacher during the CLE as she realized she didn't understand the student perspective as well as she thought. She shared, "I

thought I was open. But it just sort of made me realize a little bit more what was going on from their end" (Tina, Interview, 3/16/2018). Similarly, I experienced a shift in thinking about myself as a leader during this cycle. Noted in a memo (2/9/2018), I encountered a difficult situation where a colleague, also the parent of one of my students, was publicly unhappy with the way I was working with his child but refused to meet with me about it. When we eventually met, I advocated for our mutual objective, listening to his concerns for his child and refusing to go over unrelated points of contention. It ended with established common ground, and my hope is that in a similar situation in the future, he will look to collaborate. This situation led me to look at my preferred leadership style of being collaborative as not just working with others and hearing their perspectives, but also of modeling this behavior for them. I realized that as a middle management leader, others are not only hearing the content of what I say, but they are also seeing, and potentially learning from, the ways in which I work with them.

Shifts regarding the reform process. As a result of engaging in this work, members of the CPR group and I also experienced shifts in our thinking about the way we make changes in the school. During the CPR meeting after the CLE, we discussed the fact that reform that works for all constituents takes more time and work than previously thought. As the teacher member of the group explained, "the more we delve into it, the more I realize that everyone has a very different opinion, especially [on] that ideal homework question…. There's not a simple solution. It might not be one solution fits all" (Tracy, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018). As a counselor put it, "including people, giving people the opportunity to share their opinions, is a move forward, regardless of whether we have come up with changes that we want to put in place yet." She later added, saying that engaging in this work "makes me very hopeful that we can embark upon some really positive change. It's not going to be fast, but I think we will improve our homework

system through this process" (Allison, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018). However, evidence also emerged that changes in philosophy, policy, and practice were supported, and movement towards these changes was beginning to occur. In the next section, I delve deeper into the evidence surrounding these themes.

Philosophy, Policy, and Practice Change

During PAR Cycle One, a major theme that emerged was one of a school ripe for change. While major changes in policies were not realized during PAR Cycle Two, evidence continued to mount that engaging in dialogue with others holding varied points of view leads to richer discussions. These discussions were about the feasibility of practice and policy changes and involved unpacking the underlying philosophies of individuals and the school as a whole. These discussions then resulted in movement toward changes in philosophies, policies, and practices.

The PAR Cycle One CLE discussions about homework largely focused on what people saw as issues and what they would like to see done differently. This is the inquiry piece of the CLE model (Guajardo, et. al, 2016). The CPR group and I then took that feedback, looked for generative themes, and then used those themes to guide discussions with administrators and other constituents (Freire, 2000). In addition, we used those themes to develop the questions for the Cycle Two CLE, looking more at how to make changes, the action piece of the CLE model. This engagement of reflection and action is the praxis cycle. By investigating things according to co-developed themes, we were actually practicing an unusual way to tackle organizational transformation. As I attended meetings and had discussions with other constituents as well as the CPR team, evidence began to emerge that conversations between and among various constituents led to movement toward changes in philosophy, policy, and practice. Illustrated in Table 16, the conversations tended to include support for these changes, reasons why certain things should stay

Table 1611

Policy, Practice, and Philosophy Changes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Student
Policy change: Support for	1		9	1	3	2	3
Policy Change: Defense against		2	2			1	2
Policy change: Barrier to	3	1	6		1		1
Policy change: Call for action	3	1	3	1			6
Policy Change: Movement toward	4	2	3	2	1		
Policy: Lack of	2						
Practice change: support for			7		2	1	
Practice change: defense against		2	4			1	
Practice change: barrier to	2	7	3	1	2	1	2
Practice change: Movement toward	1	2	1		4	1	1
Practice change: call for action	6	6	2	1			3
Philosophy change: support for		1	8			2	1
Philosophy change: defense against				1	1		

Table 16 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtgs	Post-CLE CPR Mtg	Interview: Admin	Interview: Teacher	Interview: Parent	Interview: Student
Philosophy change: barrier to	1		4	1		2	
Philosophy change: Movement toward	2			1	1		
Philosophy change: call for action	2	1	10		2	1	
Philosophy: call for clarity	3	5					
Philosophy: articulated	2						

the same, explanations of barriers, calls for actions, and sometimes movement towards changes. In the following sections, I explore the differences between practice, policy, and philosophy changes, sharing the specific findings for each.

Definitions. As I moved from PAR Cycle One to PAR Cycle Two, I realized that what I coded as policy was more complicated than originally thought. I had used "policy" as an umbrella term that included the daily practices as well as the underlying philosophies that guide what we do. However, these three concepts are interconnected, and often philosophies need to shift in order for changes in policies to be effective in changing practices. This idea was echoed by a mixed table group at the CLE who noted in their discussion comments that "people have different visions of the purpose of homework. Until this is defined, there will be questions and disagreements" (Table 9, CLE notes, 3/6/2018). Therefore, I separated out the codes so that any comments about rules and regulations were coded as "policy" (for example, there should be no homework on weekends), notes about ways of accomplishing tasks or day-to-day activities were coded as "practice" (for example, students should use their study periods effectively), and comments about guiding values and priorities were coded as "philosophy" (for example, family time is more important than homework).

Policy changes. Participants and I provided support or called for homework policy changes a total of 31 times during PAR Cycle Two. These policies were largely based upon the way that homework is assigned and graded. For example, the three students interviewed after the CLE all spoke about the theme of grading homework only on completion. The eighth grader provided support for this change saying, "It's a form of review. It's not about testing your knowledge because you obviously just learned it, but to make sure that you can really implement and work with those concepts and ideas in your mind. And so, I think that if you're really looking

for an accuracy, that's what tests are for, tests and quizzes" (Scott, Interview, 3/15/2018). In addition, an administrator shared that he wants the school to adjust the homework expectations for grade 6 because "I really want to look at how can we make the transition to grade 6 easier. What can we do in regard to homework? What can we do in regard to [studying expectations for] tests and quizzes?" (Alan, Interview, 3/21/2018). These calls for policy changes, whether they indicated the first time that a voice was included in the conversation or a shift in philosophy, are significant as they implied that there was support for changes that better serve the population.

Particularly during meetings and conversations with others, I encountered several instances in which the discussions went beyond saying things should change to some sort of movement toward policy change, either with discussions of specific policies or in conversations about how changes could be implemented. For example, the highest levels of math have historically carried much larger homework loads than other subjects due to requirements of alignment with upper school courses. During the math meeting I attended this semester, there were discussions about removing this requirement in order to alleviate some homework stress for middle school students (Memo, 1/28/2018). In addition, there were several points of discussion during the post-CLE CPR meeting as we analyzed the data from the CLE, narrowed down the key themes, and determined suggestions to take to the administration.

Practice changes. While changes in policies occur at the school level and can only be enacted by teachers and administrators, practices are more individual and include the activities of students and parents. During PAR Cycle Two, participants, CPR group members, and I called for changes in practices eighteen times and provided reasons to support changes in practices on ten different occasions. Calls for practice changes were largely related to changes in homework practices of individuals, either targeting teachers in how they assign work or students in their

completion of it. For example, a student noted that her peers should always use their study periods to complete homework (Stacy, Interview, 3/15/2018). During the post-CLE CPR meeting, I also relayed that several mixed groups during the CLE wanted homework to include feedback during the post-CLE CPR meeting, saying "if you're giving homework then there needs to be some sort of feedback to the student, and I don't know if it was clear if that needs to be that the teacher is writing feedback or if the student is able to get feedback on their own by accessing an answer key or something like that" (Lori, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018). In addition, participants provided their reasoning for changes in practices, such as when a parent shared her experience with reducing her children's after-school activity schedule as an example of why parents should help provide balance, saying "I think it's like a cycle, they end up sleeping better, they're happier, mommy's not yelling at them as much" (Peggy, Interview, 3/16/2018).

Movement toward change. During PAR Cycle Two, there were sightings of movement toward changes in practices (McDonald, 1996), meaning that individuals were taking the learning from CLEs a step further and using their new understanding of other perspectives to influence and adjust their daily practices. For example, a teacher shared that she was "warming up to the idea of differentiating the homework. I'm trying to make it more meaningful. And I think I'm going to try to do that with [giving students] choice. And just reminding them the purpose. You know, I know the purpose of why I want you to do this but trying to make it more apparent to them by having them choose perhaps" (Tina, Interview, 3/16/2018).

There were also sightings of movement toward changes in reform practices to include more voices and provide more opportunities for constituents to weigh in on changes occurring. While there were no events utilizing CLE pedagogies beyond the CLE itself, there were more conversations with constituents prior to changes. For example, the math and Mandarin

curriculum changes were brought about as a result of parent and student feedback about certain needs not being met, such as students who are fluent Mandarin speakers but cannot write being placed in classes with non-native speakers as there was no appropriate class for them. In discussing the way that similar changes were rolled out in other divisions without discussing them with teachers, parents, or students that background information, the middle school principal contrasted those constituents' negative reactions with the success of CLEs in helping constituents listen and feel heard. Thus, the middle school involved teachers in the change process and invited parents in for a sharing session about the changes prior to implementation (Memo, 1/28/2018). These sightings indicate that while changes in practice happen slowly, some movement towards these changes was occurring during PAR Cycle Two.

Barriers to change. One reason that change in practice happens slowly is that there are several potential roadblocks. Members of all constituent groups as well as CPR group members and I referenced barriers to changes in the practices of individuals. In some instances, these barriers were related to structure or time. For example, after the CLE, a teacher mentioned that as a result of what she learned, she wanted to adjust the way she assigned homework on a daily basis to include more choice and differentiation, but she was getting stuck in implementation. She said "I'm trying to think; well how would I do that? …. because we do get set in our ways with homework. And how to change it while you're also trying to…write assessments and everything else. Trying to find the time…when you [already] have, for example, a worksheet that you could assign" (Tina, Interview, 3/6/2018).

Particularly during the CPR group meetings, these barriers also presented themselves as being philosophical in nature. For example, a student member of the CPR group discussed why he would struggle to spend less time on homework even if less were assigned, saying "my

parents or some other parents, they mentioned to their child about how if you don't work hard your future is going to be [bad]. And so there's a lot of pressure. There's a lot of competition [around] grades. If you do better, you'll stand out more and be able to go to better schools and have a better job and stuff" (Steven, CPR Meeting, 3/12/2018).

As illustrated in the examples above, there was evidence that changes in practices related to both homework and decision-making were desirable and being considered. However, practical barriers such as time and habit as well as competing values exist. In the next section, I further explore potential changes in philosophies that might also influence changes in practice.

Philosophy changes. While changes in philosophy were the least-referenced type of change during interviews with CLE participants, they were a frequent topic of discussion during CPR meetings throughout PAR Cycle Two, and I often wrote about them in my memos. On many occasions, the CPR group not only talked about potential changes, but we also talked about, and sometimes called for clarity of, the philosophies that undergird our current policies. For example, the CPR group examined the current homework policy during our second meeting, and we discussed the reasons that some subjects are allowed to give more homework than others.

Movement toward change. Hints of shifts in philosophies about learning and its relationship to overall wellbeing were emerging during PAR Cycle Two. Regarding reductions of homework and changes in the way that it was assigned, an administrator shared that "homework is mentioned at every faculty meeting…. I think they certainly understand the spirit of where…we need to go to" (Alan, Interview, 3/21/2018). On a larger scale, I noted shifts in the community's readiness to receive the message that children need support and guidance to grow in areas beyond academics as I reflected on the positive feedback I received following the visit of an expert on cross-cultural identity who shared several stories from her work (Memo,

3/18/2018). While not explicitly related to homework or CLEs, this shift was further evidence that the priorities for student learning both in and out of school were starting to change. However, policies and practices that fully reflect those changes were likely to be slower due to several barriers.

Barriers to change. A major barrier to changing philosophies about homework is a competing commitment to another philosophy. For example, the existing middle school homework policy called for teachers of the same course to teach in lockstep, thereby assessing using the same tests and assigning the same homework. However, a common theme in the PAR Cycle One CLE was a preference for differentiation. This barrier was discussed at length during CPR meetings then ultimately became a question posed during the CLE: "How can we personalize or differentiate homework while also ensuring that students learn the same content?" (CLE Agenda, 3/6/2018). At another point when discussing potential reductions in homework that might require changes in curriculum, an administrator on the CPR team lamented that "it's an overarching balancing act here is that we know when you graduate from [the school], you are really well-prepared with great opportunities. We have to be very careful [with the changes we make]" (Alex, CPR Meeting, 3/15/2018).

Taken together, the large number of references to changes of policy, practice, and philosophy provide strong support for the conclusion that conversations between and among members of different constituent groups led to richer discussions about the reasons for change, assessing how to maneuver around barriers to those changes, and ultimately, movement toward those changes. As stated earlier, major shifts in practices and therefore the day to day experiences of students were still not apparent during this cycle. In an upcoming section, I explore the reasons for this lag by looking at homework through an organizational lens.

Big Picture Connections

The data gathered from the CLE as well as other meetings and informal conversations throughout PAR Cycle Two continued to provide evidence for the questions I aimed to answer in this study. The themes of connectedness and inclusion that emerged during and outside of CLEs continued to support the conclusion that as a school, we were honoring the wisdom of people and working to include equitable voices in the reform process. In addition, shifts in thinking and movement toward changes in policies, practices, and philosophies provided support for the idea that our conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling were also shifting, particularly as we connected ideas and concepts.

Supporting Equitable Voice

Evidence from the CLE as well as other meetings and conversations continued to support the idea that the inclusion of multiple voices is both necessary and helpful to the decision-making process. Members of all constituent groups felt their wisdom was honored and noted alliances that formed as a result of collaboration with others. However, the evidence also supported the idea that crossing boundaries to engage in meaningful conversations is a critical part of increasing equitable voice (Guajardo et al., 2016). These feelings of alliance and inclusion arose from sharing stories and perspectives directly with other constituents and learning from each other rather than more traditional ways of sharing feedback that are often one-directional.

The evidence also pointed to movement towards changes in philosophies, policies, and practices, and many constituents viewed the movement towards change positively, as evidenced by the closing circle of the CLE. This supports the conclusions of Osberg, Pope, and Galloway (2006) that when students are engaged in reform and their opinions taken seriously, students and

adults view the reform efforts favorably. In addition, continued efforts to partner with families in both the CLE and other areas of reform echo the principles of family involvement espoused by Henderson and Mapp (2002) as we continued working to build collaborative relationships that respect and address needs through a philosophy of shared power and responsibility.

Convergence of Ideas about Learning and Schooling

A key part of my research involved asking how conversations between and among various constituents deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling. During PAR Cycle Two, the evidence mounted that constituents and I broadened our understanding of homework as it relates to learning, but also that we began to see parallels between CLEs and the other initiatives taking place related to wellness education and its place in schooling.

Connecting homework to learning. During PAR Cycle Two, participants, the CPR group, and I realized that while we can drill down to homework as a concrete issue to be adjusted, policy and practice changes cannot be made effectively without examining the way we view and assess student learning. Key themes of the answers to the "what is ideal homework?" question from the CLE were that it needs to be meaningful and related to classwork. However, often it seemed that students did not see the relevance in what they were completing at home. This backs up Vatterott's (2010) claim that the first hallmark of good homework is that of purpose, that students know they are checking for understanding of concepts or applying knowledge and skills. As documented in my memos, this came up several other times during PAR Cycle Two as well. For example, during a meeting discussing the grading and weighting of homework, the group of teachers from various disciplines ultimately determined that the discussion cannot be separated from a larger and more important discussion about the ways that we as a school assess learning as a whole. This team of teachers debated the use of formative

versus summative assessments while also calling for a determination of how work habits should figure into a student's overall grade (Memo, 2/27/2018). While there is competing evidence and research about how to answer these questions, as Marzano and Pickering (2007) argue, it is important for us as educators to come together to combine the information gleaned from research with our knowledge about how homework impacts the achievement of our own students.

Connecting CLEs to wellness. In addition to connecting homework to learning, I also repeatedly noticed and noted connections between CLE axioms and pedagogies and other initiatives within the school. One of the most prominent connections was between CLEs and positive education, which is the basis of our school-wide wellness program. Positive education is based on Martin Seligman's (2011) work in positive psychology that includes a model for the domains that contribute to an individual's overall wellbeing, known by the acronym PERMA. Illustrated in Table 17, I noted strong connections and parallels between this model that illustrates the important ingredients to flourishing individual wellbeing and the CLE model, RASPPA, that illustrates the important ingredients for groups of individuals to promote flourishing organizational change. Both models emphasize building positive relationships as a cornerstone. In addition, both models also recognize the importance of strengths-based thinking rather than deficit-based, as noted in both the Assets tenet of RASPPA and the Positive Emotions domain of PERMA. Digging into Stories also seems to be a way to facilitate Engagement. Furthermore, the Politic and Place portions of RASPPA are both related to doing the right thing for that particular place and those particular people, which aligns well with the Meaning aspect of PERMA, which is all about finding purpose. Finally, both models include an eye toward goals and improvement as both the Action part of RASPPA and the Accomplishment part of PERMA are about the actions that we take for the betterment of ourselves and/or others.

Table 17

Connections between CLE Theory of Change and Positive Psychology Domains

RASPPA	PERMA
R – Relationships (building trust and healthy relationships)	R – Relationships (connections and strong relationships are essential)
A – Assets (utilizing the strengths of individuals and the organization)	P - Positive Emotions (experiencing optimism, pleasure, and enjoyment, particularly when utilizing character strengths)
S- Stories (telling, decoding, and examining the origins and content)	E – Engagement (blissful immersion in activities)
P- Politic (acting to better the self, organization, and community)	M – Meaning (finding purpose in what you do)
P- Place (understanding the history and culture of place)	A – Accomplishment (goals as well as ambition and drive to achieve those goals)
A- Action (inspire, motivate, and move people to act for public good)	

Another important connection exists between my PAR study and positive education, the model bringing positive psychology into education. The Institute of Positive Education (n.d.) has set forth a set of four key processes for helping schools and students reap the most benefit from the model. These processes, illustrated and defined in Table 18, are Learn, Live, Teach, Embed. Similarly, this PAR study is based upon determining how learning from others through CLEs helps individuals and the school live the principles of CLEs in order to teach them to others and embed them in the philosophies, practices, and policies of the school as a whole.

Another tool that the school has adopted to enhance the wellness initiative is Responsive Classroom. Based on the idea that students need social and emotional competencies as well as academic competencies, the Responsive Classroom approach "is designed to support teachers and principals in creating a middle school experience that's responsive to the developmental, academic, social, and emotional strengths and needs of every young adolescent" (Center for Responsive Schools, Inc., 2018, p. 5). Several of the principles of this approach are similar to CLEs, particularly that learning occurs through social interaction and that it is important for teachers to understand their students' perspectives and work collaboratively with others, namely teachers and parents. In addition, many of the pedagogies used in Responsive Classroom are similar to those utilized in CLEs. For example, the circle is a central part of both models as it allows for connections between participants and flattened hierarchies. In addition, Responsive Classroom utilizes pedagogies like Learning Walks and World Cafés to bring students together in different ways so that they may build connections and collaborate with each other.

Taken together, the parallels between CLEs and the various arms of the school wellness initiative signal that individuals, as well as the school collectively, have taken strides towards philosophical shifts in conceptions of schooling and the importance of learning from others.

Table 1812

Four Key Processes to Implementing and Sustaining Positive Education

Process	Description
Learn It	Sharing opportunities as a whole-school community to understand and engage with the science of wellbeing.
Live It	Enacting evidence-based wellbeing practices in our own way in our own lives.
Teach It	Providing students with dedicated time to discover and explore each of the key domains of wellbeing.
Embed It	Adopting long-term, school-wide policies and practices which support and nurture wellbeing within individuals and within the community.

Note. Institute of Positive Education, (n.d.).

While these shifts may not be specifically attributed to the CLEs themselves, CLE pedagogies and ideas can be utilized to enrich and expand the way that we implement these programs, particularly by bringing diverse voices into discussions and decision-making processes whereby we evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative.

Zeroing in on Homework: An Organizational Theory Lens

As explained in Chapter 5, the CPR group chose homework as the topic of the CLEs because it had been deemed problematic across constituent groups, implying consensus that some sort of change is necessary. As the data for both Cycle One and Cycle Two imply, some shifts in perspectives and attitudes happened through the CLE process, but as PAR Cycle Two drew to a close, shifts in policies and practices were not yet occurring on a large scale. And, as is clear from a preceding section, there was movement toward shifts in policy, philosophy, and practices at the organizational level, and the discussion of homework in the CLE context was really a leverage tool to open up conversations at the organizational level.

Changes in culture and policies in schools happen slowly. In the following sections, I examine this discrepancy between shifts in attitudes and shifts in practices through the lens of Martin's (2002) three perspectives theory of culture within the organization in order to better understand what aspects of the school culture might be preventing or slowing changes in practice.

Desire for Change versus Change in Practice

Data continued to emerge that reducing homework was supported by all constituent groups (administrators, parents, teachers, and students). In both Cycle One and Cycle Two of my PAR, very little resistance to this idea was noted. Instead, themes emerging during the

Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) included preferences for less time spent on homework and prioritizing sleep, other extra-curricular activities, and family time above homework.

Prior to the pilot CLE, the middle school principal precipitously called for a twenty percent reduction in homework. However, the official policy that was already in place went unchanged. As school officials, we tell parents and students to expect about 15 minutes per core subject in grade 6, 20 in grade 7, and 25 in grade 8. This amounts to the average student spending about 90/120/150 minutes per night in each respective grade. The principal reported that he had been told by parents and students that homework loads had decreased since that time, but it was unclear whether the levels dropped below the expectations outlined in the policy or if they instead were previously higher than the stated policy. Yet, there was also a sense that homework has value and helps children learn. During the CLEs, only one small group of parents suggested that there be no homework. However, all constituent groups espoused the belief that balance must still be sought and homework should be more meaningful than it was at that time, meaning that further reductions and adjustments should be made.

The CLEs brought members of all constituent groups together to share wisdom and discuss the issue of homework. However, the weight of making changes generally falls on the shoulders of the teachers. While only a sampling of teachers attended the CLEs, the themes were shared and discussed in steering and faculty meetings. Teachers vocalized little resistance to the ideas of balance and having less homework, but since the initial reductions, few additional changes to homework practices had been made. Homework is something that is assigned anew each day, but students and parents continued to report struggles with the amounts and how to balance homework with other activities.

As one Community Learning Exchange (CLE) participant put it, “I think the idea of limiting [homework] or keeping it reduced is something I was always in line with or in favor of. And it seems like a lot of people are in favor of that. I didn't catch any resistance from any parties of ‘no, we want more.’ [laughs]. Yeah, it was sort of an easy win it seems like. But maybe not…in application,” (Tina, Interview, 3/16/18). This teacher went on to say that she had not made changes to her current practices but was thinking about doing so in the final quarter of the school year as she would have more time to plan. This sentiment was a common one as other teachers reported wanting to make changes but needing time to plan out how they will deviate from their current methods of assigning homework.

While time may be one factor in the discrepancy between reported teacher support for changes in homework practices and actual changes, one may wonder if there were other factors at play. In the next section, I address the persistence of current homework practices through the lens of three different organizational theories.

Applicable Theories

I examined this discrepancy between desire and practice through multiple organizational theory lenses, and while Bolman and Deal’s (2009) symbolic frame rang true with homework symbolizing rigor, it did not fully explain the multi-faceted barriers to change. Therefore, I turned to Martin’s (2002) theories of organizational culture to examine why changes in practice may lag behind changes in perspectives.

Homework as a symbol of rigor. Bolman and Deal (2009) assert that “an organization’s culture is revealed and communicated through its symbols” (p. 254). Two of their suppositions for this theory are that activity and meaning are loosely coupled and culture unites people to accomplish desired ends. As I applied these suppositions to homework at the school, it was

evident that a core value of the school was preparing students for academically rigorous colleges and institutions. However, it appeared that the individual and daily activities that occur within the school were loosely coupled from and less important than the idea that students appear prepared for college and the "real world."

The school mission statement includes academic excellence as a stated goal, and this is most often the driving force behind the things that we do. While not explicitly defined in the mission statement or elsewhere in official school documents, academic excellence is most commonly associated with the term "rigor". Also not explicitly defined, our conversations about rigor are centered on ideas that all members of the organization do difficult things, work hard, and work a lot. Everyone from the head of school to teachers to students often talks about the large amount of time they spend at school and/or working on school-related activities outside of school hours.

Homework has also become a symbol of rigor in that it represents movement towards that end goal of preparation for college. As Bolman and Deal (2009) asserted, symbols are created to resolve confusion and provide direction. While being prepared for college is a nebulous concept, completing large amounts of homework has become a symbol of movement towards that goal for parents and students. It is also a binding force between students at the school. They often talk about homework outside of class, bonding as they lament the work they must do or helping each other complete certain tasks.

Whether the assigned homework actually helps prepare students for college and beyond is irrelevant. The symbol of homework as rigor, which is the path to the future, persists. As explained earlier, there are initiatives in place to broaden constituents' views of being prepared for the future to include other aspects of wellbeing as well as academic excellence. However,

buy-in has occurred incrementally and academic excellence is still a top priority, so it is hard to let go of the symbols that go along with it. Perhaps as we incorporate more stories of success that are interwoven with other aspects of wellbeing, the symbols will change.

Three perspectives theory of culture. While useful in helping to understand homework as a symbol of rigor, the symbolic lens does not shed as much light on the reasons that groups and individual teachers have not made changes that they believe are both necessary and desirable for their students. In order to understand the discrepancy more fully, I looked at organizational culture within the school through all three of Martin's (2002) perspectives. In addition, this way of looking at the discrepancy between ideas and practices may best help define the problem and help shed light on how to shift practices so that they better align with the desire for less homework and a more balanced life. In this section, I explore each of the three perspectives – integration, differentiation, and fragmentation – and then discuss how they can be viewed in concert.

Integration. The integration perspective involves looking for consistency and organizational consensus. As stated earlier, a common part of the culture of the school is preparing students for academically rigorous futures. This and other aspects of school culture define the school and symbolize its values. For example, students and faculty work hard, and students do as they are told. With respect to homework, this means that students and teachers expect to work outside of school hours, both on assignments for their classes and extra-curricular activities. In addition, if teachers assign homework, students do it. At the same time, there is implicit support for the idea that homework is useful. In addition, there is trust that the hard work will pay off in the future and that teachers know the best way to help students realize their intended future success. There are constituents who have not signed onto these beliefs, such as

families who do not leave time for homework in their schedules, students who do not follow instructions, or teachers who do not want to plan or grade outside of school hours, but these people need to be "brought on board" and often find themselves in discussions with teachers or administrators about why we do things the way we do them at this school.

Differentiation. From a differentiation perspective, there are differing views of homework within varying sub-cultures. These differences occur across different constituent groups, cultural groups, and other sub-groupings within the school. For example, there are inherent differences in the ways in which teachers view homework as compared with students or parents. While all constituent groups may view homework as an important part of learning and schooling, they may have different reasons for this view and prioritize it differently among other aspects of life. Teachers may prioritize content knowledge within their own subject over balance of life as this is the area in which they are assessed. Therefore, seeing homework as a tool for increasing student content knowledge may outweigh a desire for students to have time for other activities. At the same time, parents may view homework as a tool for helping children learn the value of hard work and perseverance, thus leading them to support their children doing some amount of homework each night. Finally, students may see the value in homework but not want it to take away from the other activities which they also value.

Cultural differences also play a role. The school exists within both Eastern and Western cultures as it is an American school in an Asian city, educating cross-cultural students. The adult constituents span a multitude of Eastern and Western upbringings, and while the majority of faculty were educated in the West, the majority of parents were educated in the East. As described more fully in Chapter 2, there are many differences in the orientation towards learning as well as methods of learning between these two cultures. Therefore, it is not surprising that

different sub-cultures exist when describing familiar and ideal homework practices because experiences shape perspectives. For teachers assigning homework, their experiences receiving homework and training to be a teacher may influence their practices as well.

Finally, if we continue to look solely at those who have the power to adjust homework, teachers, there are still more sub-groupings, both formal and informal. Teachers in the school work on interdisciplinary teaching teams within their grade levels, but they also work with their teaching partners who teach the same course. The teams get together to discuss students and spread out assessments, but the teaching partners are expected to plan together and align their curriculum. Therefore any changes in practices affect those partners. At the same time, there are teachers who are early proponents of the ideas of balance of life and wellbeing and those who are more focused on their content areas.

Fragmentation. The fragmentation perspective focuses on ambiguity and highlights the fact that organizations are complex and that "consensus is transient and issue specific," (Martin, 2003, p. 94). As described in the previous section, teachers often find themselves in overlapping sub-groups. However, even within these sub-groups, they may be contending with competing ideals and perspectives. A teacher who attended a CLE and wanted to modify his homework practices might find himself working on a team with partner teachers who do not want to adjust the tried and true homework assignments that have been established for a given unit of study. Other ideals might also be competing with his desire for change. He may want to lessen homework, but not at the expense of test scores or harmony with his co-teachers. He may also lack the time or expertise to create alternate assignments or find a way to demonstrate student understanding in ways that require less homework.

Taken together, the three perspectives illustrate the complexity of the issue of homework as well as the reasons why even as perspectives on homework are changing, practices are still rooted in tradition. On the surface, there is consensus that the school is committed to academic excellence and that homework should be part of the learning process that leads to that excellence. However, there are differences in opinions and practices related to homework as well as varying ways in which we prioritize homework in comparison to other things. On a similar note, constituents would agree that wellness and balance of life are rising as a priority for the school. However, there are varying degrees of buy-in and while some sub-groups believe that a focus on well-being enhances academic achievement, others still see it as an added bonus. Still others believe that academic achievement creates opportunities for wellness in other areas.

Moving Forward

In order to change practices, we need to examine the ways in which the organizational culture limits the changes we can make. External legitimizing bodies are not going away, and we will continue to define ourselves as a rigorous institution committed to academic excellence. Therefore, we need to ask how we can decouple extensive amounts of homework from the ideas of rigor and "good" schooling so that homework and success no longer feel like competing ideals. In addition, we need to continue to discuss the resources and supports that teachers need in order to adjust practices so that they can continue to help students achieve the same standards and benchmarks with less homework.

Implications for my Role as Leader

The fourth research sub-question asks how engagement in this work transforms my own leadership practices. Throughout this cycle, I wrote memos about my leadership activities, and in particular, I explored the many ways in which I led from the middle. I found that I continued to

advocate for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes, I came to view myself as a conduit between teachers, parents, and administrators, and I both observed and acted on opportunities to lead.

As the findings from PAR Cycle Two continued to provide evidence for the conclusion that including more voices in the decision-making process is good for those involved as well as the decisions being made, I continued to advocate for my own inclusion in committees and discussions where I felt my voice needed to be heard, and I reaped the benefits of others beginning to ask for my voice where they might not have before. For example, during this cycle, I initiated several conversations with the math department chair as he led his department through a curriculum shift, and he subsequently asked me to join the discussion with other teachers and school leaders. In addition, I continued to try to act as an "equity warrior" (Leverett, 2002) by advocating for equitable outcomes and representation. One way that I did this was by connecting and dialoguing with other like-minded individuals through the culturally-sustaining pedagogy discussions. The group continued to meet after PAR Cycle Two ended, discussing ways in which we can influence practices within the school to be more equitable.

During this cycle, I also further explored my role as a middle level leader, specifically seeing myself as having influence as a conduit between constituents and higher levels of leadership. As I chronicled my leadership tasks, I realized that many colleagues shared this view. Several teachers asked to "run something by" me prior to taking it to administrators, and administrators did the same before important meetings with teachers and parents. For example, the director of pedagogy, with whom I do not often work, came to me prior to the cross-divisional math meeting saying that "he appreciated the questions I asked in both meetings and wanted to run through the flow of the meeting with me" (Memo, 1/28/2018). In addition, having

regular meetings with teaching teams, middle school leadership, and the deputy head of school, I acknowledged that I was in the distinct position of knowing and influencing what was happening day to day with teachers and students, but also being able to share the "pulse of the school" with my superiors. I realized that I hear and understand the stories of individuals, but I also see the big picture.

As a leader in the middle, I more fully embraced Tyack and Cuban's (1995) idea of tinkering as "preserving what is valuable and reworking what is not" (p. 5). During this cycle, rather than presenting CLEs and their axioms as new ideas, I used my influential position, working to connect CLEs to the underlying tenets of other initiatives that have positive momentum within the school. I began to realize that my role as a middle leader allows me to influence the practices of teachers and administrators, and I advocated for the inclusion of voices in decision-making as well as utilizing a strengths-based approach to reform. For example, during this cycle, I worked with a teacher who was struggling to meet the expectations of administrators and his department chair, who were providing a good deal of negative feedback. Seeing me as what Little (2006) termed a "critical friend," the teacher asked me to observe his classes and provide feedback. As I recorded in a memo on April 20, 2018, I found myself reflecting on Knowles' theory of andragogy (Drago-Severson, 2009) as well as the fifth CLE axiom, that hope and change are built on assets (Guajardo et al., 2016). I endeavored to help this teacher improve through support to utilize his strengths and modeling ways to improve. During our discussion about my observations, we discussed the merits of a certain technique he was using and how he could use it in other situations as well as shared the names of other teachers who might be able to model and support him as he worked to improve his classroom management strategies.

My role as a middle leader also provided the vantage point of seeing the leadership practices of others up close. During this cycle, I often watched administrators in the school handle dilemmas and initiate change, asking myself how I act in those situations. My memos chronicled these musings, and my leadership preferences often mirrored CLE axioms. For example, I most often referenced collaborative leadership, preferring to include the perspectives of others in conversations throughout the decision-making process. I also referenced a preference for a strengths-based approach that utilizes assets of constituents and connects their dreams to those of the school as a whole.

Throughout PAR Cycle Two, I continued to advocate for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes. In addition, I further examined and expanded my role as a middle leader acting as a connector helping students, teachers, parents, and administrators understand and talk with each other. Finally, I took advantage of this middle leadership role that allowed me to observe other leaders and act on opportunities to lead.

Conclusion and Research Implications for PAR Cycle Three

In summary, during PAR Cycle Two, the evidence continued to mount that the process whereby the CPR group and I worked together to plan CLEs created the conditions for participants to have meaningful conversations that allowed for increased understanding of others' perspectives, increased connections to others, and shifts in thinking. In addition, the shifts in thinking and more collaborative and inclusive discussions emerged during and outside the CLE process, and there was evidence that they triggered movement towards changes in philosophies, policies, and practices of individuals and the school. However, large-scale and official changes in policies and practices had not yet been implemented, and it remained to be

seen how these changes would lead to better serving the diverse student and family population of this school.

In the next chapter, I explain the leadership activities and findings from PAR Cycle Three where I delved deeper into chronicling how policies, practices, and philosophies shifted as a result of CLE participation and other collaboration across boundaries and perspectives. I looked specifically at how this work impacted homework policies and practices, but I also looked at how utilizing CLE pedagogies influenced the attitudes and actions of individuals and led to increased equity of voice. In addition, I explain how I continued to connect CLE ideas, particularly the idea of honoring the wisdom of constituents, to other initiatives in order to further enhance and extend their effectiveness and staying power. Finally, change is not always better, and the central focus of this project was to make changes that better serve the student and family population. Therefore, I performed member checks with the CPR group in order to evaluate how my interpretation of the evidence matched with theirs. The full process and findings are outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE THREE

Introduction

The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) project was to increase equitable voice among all school constituents and thereby better serve a culturally diverse student and family population. During PAR Cycles One and Two, I utilized the methodology of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) to bring diverse voices together for inquiry and dialogue. During PAR Cycle Three, I explored the impact of those conversations on the policies, practices, and philosophies of individual constituents and the school in general. In this chapter, I first describe my key leadership activities, including the ways in which I investigated the impact of homework policy changes, worked with others to increase student voice, and discussed my findings with my Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team. I then analyze the data, drawing themes in which knowledge and insight gained during the Cycle One and Two CLEs transferred into the homework policies, practices, and philosophies of various constituents and increased equitable voice, indicating that authentic conversations are critical components of reform. Finally, I summarize my findings and look ahead to the upcoming final chapter.

PAR Cycle III Leadership Activities

During participatory action research (PAR) Cycles One and Two, evidence indicated conditions for participants to have meaningful conversations allowed for increased

- understanding of others' perspectives,
- connections to others, and
- shifts in thinking.

In addition, these shifts in thinking and more collaborative and inclusive discussions continued outside the CLE process and seemed to trigger movement towards changes in philosophies,

policies, and practices of individuals and the school. However, large-scale and official changes in policies and practices had not yet been implemented.

In this section, I share the key leadership activities that occurred during PAR Cycle Three. First, I explain how I delved deeper into chronicling how policies, practices, and philosophies began to shift as a result of CLE participation and other collaboration across boundaries and perspectives. I then turn to two initiatives that I co-facilitated in order to increase student voice, one gathering data about ideal teacher/student relationships, and the other facilitating a team of students interested in improving student well-being. Next, I discuss the continuation of the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team. Finally, this section concludes with a description of how this data was collected and analyzed.

Investigating Changes in Policies, Philosophies, and Practices

During PAR Cycle Two, evidence emerged that there was movement towards changes in policies, practices, and philosophies. Therefore, my first objective during PAR Cycle Three was to determine what changes occurred, particularly in relation to the CLE topic of homework. I did this first by understanding changes to the policy and then talking with teachers about changes to their practices and philosophies. However, I was also interested in understanding other changes to the ways in which we do school and include constituents in decision-making processes. I talked with many constituents about these changes, but I also spent a great deal of time with one particular teacher to discuss changes and how to implement them.

Homework policy changes. Near the end of the 2017-18 school year, just after PAR Cycle Two ended, several teachers and administrators met several times to discuss the homework data gathered during CLEs and make adjustments to the grade 6 homework policy. As a result of these discussions, teachers implemented a policy for the 2018-19 school year that included a

reduction in the amount of homework assigned each night and adjusted the introduction of technology as a homework tool (Meeting Notes, 5/1/2018). Throughout PAR Cycle Three, I met with teachers, students, and administrators to discuss the implications and success of these homework policy changes as well as other changes in homework practices and philosophies. The majority of these meetings were with Cycle One or Two CLE participants, so I also talked with each of them about their lasting impressions of the CLEs.

Conversations with constituents. Throughout PAR Cycle Three, I met with members of all constituent groups to discuss their practices and philosophies as well as any changes that may have occurred in relation to homework and/or their experiences during the PAR Cycle One and Two CLEs. In addition, I attended a few group meetings and informal conversations in which these changes were discussed. During each of these meetings, I kept notes about what was said.

Digging deeper with one teacher. In addition to the ongoing conversations with a variety of constituents, I worked with one teacher on a more regular basis to coach her through changes in curriculum and pedagogy. Tiffany is a middle school Mandarin teacher who attended both CLEs during the first two cycles. As the leader of the middle school Mandarin team that was undergoing a major shift in curriculum and teaching practices during all three cycles, Tiffany often sought my advice on how to integrate what she learned during the CLEs with our Wellness initiative and her homeroom as well as how to make sense of all the perspectives being shared with her. Therefore**,** our conversations flowed naturally, and it was easy to establish ongoing check-ins throughout PAR Cycle Three. During these check-ins, we discussed ways to bring CLE pedagogies into her classroom beyond homeroom, talked about equity of voice within her department, and explored her own leadership capacity as well.

Directed Efforts to Increase Equity of Voice

During PAR Cycle Three, there were several specific efforts to hear and share the voices of constituents. Explained in detail in the following section, these efforts included gathering data from students about how to improve relationships with teachers and adjusting the way we facilitate Student Wellness Action Teams (SWAT) to include more student generation of ideas and actions.

Student/teacher relationship data. As described more fully in Chapter 2, there is overwhelming evidence that relationships are important for learning. While we elicit feedback from students each year about the quality of their relationships with their teachers and there have been numerous efforts to improve relationships between teachers and students within the school, we have not made a concerted effort to include student opinions in our understanding of how to improve those relationships. Therefore, my co-counselors and I decided to ask students to clarify what they believe a good relationship with a faculty member actually entails. We each visited every homeroom in our respective grade levels, asking students to list three words that describe an ideal relationship with an adult at school.

Student Wellness Action Teams (SWAT). SWAT teams have existed in the middle school for several years to promote wellness (and previously, character) within each grade level. However, my co-facilitator, Ted, and I agreed that they have traditionally been teacher-driven and tokenistic in their inclusion of student voice. Therefore, with our grade 7 team, we decided to use CLE pedagogies as well as Responsive Classroom techniques in order to increase discussion among and between student members so that their chosen initiatives would be more indicative of the issues and solutions they saw as relevant. In addition, while they needed to remain voluntary (one to two students from each of the nineteen homerooms) and therefore

might not be entirely representative of the grade level, we were pleasantly surprised to find that there was a mix of girls and boys as well as returning and new SWAT members from the previous year. In addition, student volunteers represented a range of lengths of stay at the school, cultural backgrounds, and friendship groups.

In each meeting, we began with stated goals and an opening circle. In the first meeting, we conducted a World Café in order to elicit student ideas for improving relationships and wellness as a whole. In the following meeting, we returned to the documents created during the World Cafe, completing a gallery walk in which students placed dots next to the ideas they felt were both desirable and doable, illustrated in Figure 18. We then went through a meaning-making process in which we looked for themes within the documents and determined a course of action. Together, the students decided to work on community-building between students (and including teachers) through non-class interactions. In the third meeting, the group worked on advertising and setting up a weekly before-school dodgeball game for all members of their grade. They chose a variation of dodgeball with no winners and quick ways to get back "in" after being "out" in order to keep the game from becoming exclusive. They also made plans to utilize a dodgeball tournament to raise money for a local non-profit organization.

Meeting with Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR)

At the end of PAR Cycle Three, I brought the CPR group back together to go over the data collected during all three cycles and to share the emerging themes. All members were able to attend except Alex, associate principal. We began with an opening circle as always and then the group authored their biographies to be used in this dissertation. I then explained the emerging themes from PAR Cycles One and Two, answering questions and checking for understanding and reactions. Near the end of the meeting, I asked each member to write their answers to two

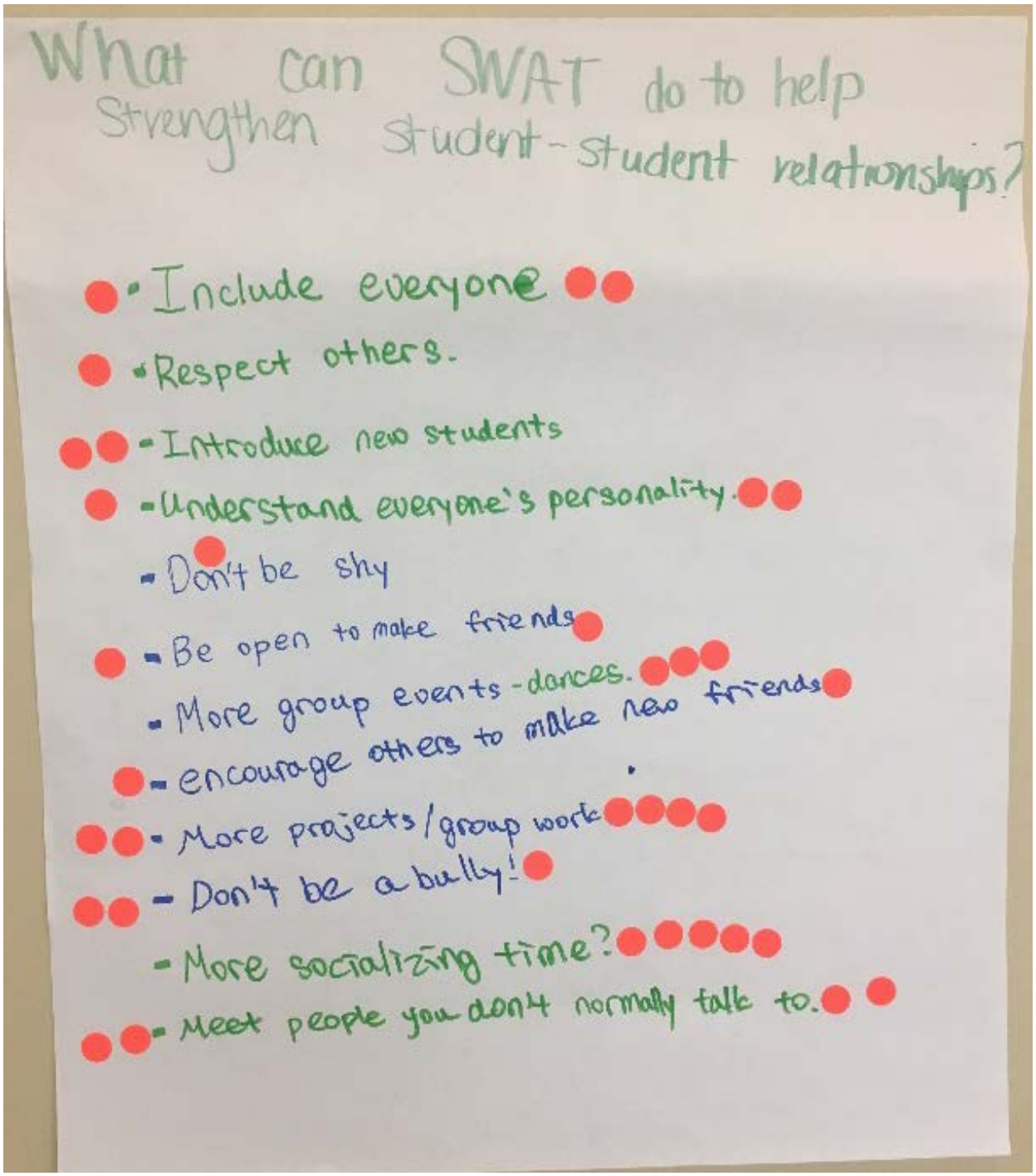

Figure 1811. SWAT World Café example question.

questions on sticky notes: (1) how has your voice been amplified during this process? and (2) what were the 2 most helpful things (for you or the school) from this process, including the planning? We then posted our answers on the wall and discussed themes. Finally, we ended the meeting with affirmations and gratitude for each member's contributions to the process.

Data Collection and Analysis

I collected and analyzed several forms of data during PAR Cycle Three. First, throughout PAR Cycle Three, I wrote memos to myself. These memos were recordings of my thoughts after meetings or discussions with others about my research, and they served as a running record of my meaning-making process while experiencing PAR Cycle Three and reflecting on the previous cycles as well as linking my leadership practices to theories I was learning in my graduate school courses.

The SWAT team meetings also provided multiple pieces of evidence, including agendas and meetings notes, World Café documents, and circle answers. The CPR group meeting agenda and transcript also provided data. I also kept notes during each of my conversations with others regarding changes, and I collected meeting notes from larger discussions related to these topics. As I collected the evidence, I deductively coded the data using the codes I created in Cycle One and refined in Cycle Two. Each time a code appeared, I placed a tick mark in my data table based on where the code appeared. After this first round of coding, I went back through the data again, this time inductively looking for codes that may not have been present in the initial codebook. As I completed this second round of coding, I also consolidated and adjusted the codes as themes continued to develop and crystalize.

Findings: Transfer into Policy, Practice, and Philosophy

There was strong evidence that engaging in dialogue and inquiry through CLEs led to meaningful conversations. In turn, these conversations led to new understandings and action. Specifically, evidence indicated changes in policy, practice, and philosophy. In this section, I share the changes that emerged in relation to homework, the topic of the PAR Cycle One and Two CLEs. These changes included a new homework policy in one grade level, adjustments to teacher practices, and shifts in thinking and changes in philosophies for members of all constituent groups. I then turn to evidence of increases of equitable voice, including specific efforts to share voices more often and feelings of empowerment to share our own voices. Finally, I bring together the evidence that it is the conversations between and among constituents that are most critical to these reforms.

Changes Related to Homework and Learning

At the culmination of PAR Cycle One, a theme that emerged was one of ripeness for change. Explained more fully in Chapter 5, I noted many calls for continued discussion and changes as well as openness to feedback and shifts in thinking. During PAR Cycle Two, this ripeness for change began to result in actual steps towards changes in policies, practices, and philosophies. Noted in Chapter 6, discussions became richer and included conversations about barriers to these changes and then movement towards new policies, practices, and philosophies. During PAR Cycle Three, it became clear that after individuals from all constituent groups came together through CLEs for dialogue and inquiry regarding homework in the middle school, several changes occurred that were met with positive feedback. In this section, I explain the specific changes to the homework policy in grade 6, note changes that teachers have made in

their practices, and explore shifts in thinking and changes in philosophies that were realized through this process.

Grade 6 homework policies. One of the largest and most noticeable changes that came out of the CLEs and subsequent discussions was an adjustment to the homework policy in grade 6. Utilizing the data gathered in PAR Cycles One and Two that technology and balance were two main concerns, several teachers and administrators met to determine the best ways to help students transition from grade 5 into grade 6. During this series of meetings, the group decided to limit homework in all subjects to three days a week (a reduction in two subject areas), limit weekend homework whenever possible, and introduce laptop homework gradually once students had learned the programs in class and were established in routines (Meeting Notes, 5/1/2018). During this cycle, several teachers and administrators shared the impact of these changes as being both positive and successful, though not without unintended consequences, as illustrated in Table 19. As the grade level counselor shared, complaints from parents and students about homework and its management had been non-existent, which was quite different from previous years where the transition from grade 5 to 6 had been tough. However, she also mused that an unintended consequence might be the "paper war" that causes difficulty for some students (Allison, Conversation Notes, 9/26/2018). In addition, a teacher shared that the slow integration of technology allowed students to get used to the many programs they have to use because they were not trying to simultaneously consolidate their learning about content and technology on their own each night (Taylor, Conversation Notes, 9/25/2018). And finally, the big picture based on parent and student feedback was best summarized by the principal in an email to all involved, "the changes you have all made are making a difference. These changes are a result of a lot of

Table 19

Policy Changes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin/ Cnslr
Policy change: Support for		1			
Policy change: Barrier to	2				
Policy Change: Movement toward		1			
Policy change re: grading			1		
Policy change re: hw					2
Policy change: - unintended consequence	1				
Policy change: + unintended consequence		1			2
Policy change: success	1	2	1		
Policy change: tech					1

self-reflection, good planning, excellent implementation, and great team work," (Email, 9/28/2018).

Changes in teacher practices. In order to adhere to the policy changes explained earlier, teachers had to adjust some of their practices. However, as a result of participation in the CLEs and learning the perspectives of people from other constituent groups, several teachers made changes to the ways they taught certain topics and assign homework, and for the most part, these changes were viewed positively by the teachers. These changes, as well as the practice changes made by members of other constituent groups, are categorized in Table 20. Some changes in practices were specific to homework, such as the math teacher who shared that he and his teaching partners had changed the types of homework assigned in each of the three levels in grade six. For example, they adjusted homework in one level of math so that there were far fewer total problems, but that they were more focused and included practice, review, and extension (Toby, Conversation Notes, 10/26/2018). Another teacher shared that taking technology out of the first several weeks of school necessitated a change in the way labs and lab reports were done in science class. Rather than simply printing out the material that was previously digital, the teacher shared that she and her teaching partners decided to change the lab itself. This shift in their teaching was a positive consequence that led to a more realistic exploration of the topic, which was more fun and easier for students to understand. However, she went on to muse that a potential unintended consequence was that less written material from each student gave her less hard evidence of how each was doing in time for progress reports to parents (Tracy, Conversation Notes, 10/4/2018).

Some changes in teacher practices also occurred without the change in homework policy for grade 6. During this cycle, I spent a good deal of time with Tiffany, a Mandarin teacher who

Table 20

Practice Changes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin / Cnslr
Practice change: support for	1	2			
Practice change: barrier to	2				
Practice change: movement toward	1	1			
Practice change: call for action					1
Practice change: tinkering/ongoing			1		
Practice change: positive			4		2
Practice change: + unintended consequence			3		
Practice change: -unintended consequence			4		
Practice change: achieved	*3*	*2*	*14*	*2*	*2*
Practice change achieved (HW)	1		5	1	1
Practice change achieved (using CLE pedagogies)			3		
Practice change achieved (voice)				1	
Practice change achieved (teaching/learning)			5		1
Practice change achieved (tech)			1		
Practice change achieved (meetings)	1				

attended both CLEs in previous cycles. Tiffany shared that she tried to limit the homework she assigned on weekends after hearing this feedback from parents and students in the CLEs (Tiffany, Conversation Notes, 8/29/2018). She also went on to share that she had adjusted the homework that she assigned her beginner level class to include more variety and make it more meaningful as her lasting impression from the CLEs was that students need less repetition and more purposeful work. Taken together, these examples provide solid evidence that teacher practices have changed as a result of participation in the CLE itself as well as the ongoing discussions and policy adjustments that continue to occur.

Shifts in thinking and changes in philosophies. During both PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Two, CLE participants from all constituent groups experienced thinking shifts in several different areas. With continued dialogue between and among members of different constituent groups regarding homework, as well as different experiences as a result of policy changes, several people have expressed changes in their philosophies towards different areas of teaching and learning. In coding the different changes in thinking that constituents shared, I found that thinking shifts and philosophy changes were related but different. In Table 21, shifts in thinking represent times when constituents expressed that they thought of homework differently or through a new lens, such as when a student mentioned that he had never thought about the work that teachers put into creating homework and wanted to remember that in the future (Steven, Conversation Notes, 10/15/2018).

However, changes in philosophies represent deeper shifts that impact our practices. For example, a math teacher shared that he had broadened his view of how students show what they know. The homework policy shift led to changes in his practices within the classroom because he needed to shift some rote practice out of homework. As a result, he was looking for creative

Table 21

Shifts in Thinking and Philosophy Changes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin/ Cnslr
Shift in thinking re: HW/learning			2	2	
Philosophy change: support for		1			
Philosophy change: barrier to	1				
Philosophy change: call for action	1				
Philosophy Change: differentiation			1		
Philosophy Change: re: hw			2	1	
Philosophy change re: assessment			1		
Philosophy change re: voice			1		
Philosophy change re: colleagues			1	1	
Weighing Practices vs. Philosophies	1				1
Weighing Philosophies vs. Policies	1		1		

ways to use class time while also examining the interplay between assessments and other work students produce in a completely new way. He shared that he and his teaching partners had changed their grading policy to de-emphasize tests and place more importance on what he called "accountable talk," (Toby, Conversation Notes, 10/26/2018). Another change noted by a student was on a smaller scale, but nonetheless significant. Sarah, a student CPR group member, noted that being part of the CPR team in addition to the CLEs had led her to think about homework differently in that she was looking for the purpose of each activity and seeing how it related to her learning more than she did in the past. In addition, she shared that she was defending homework to her friends whereas she used to join in the complaints (Sarah, Conversation Notes, 8/29/2018).

While these philosophical changes were fewer and farther between than the practice and policy changes, they are emblematic of the lasting nature of changes that occur as a result of thoughtful dialogue and inquiry. As Allison put it, "you can't have one without the other and expect real change" (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018). The preceding changes were all related to the specific content the CPR group and I decided to pursue in the CLEs, but evidence of changes in practices, philosophies, and policies related to the process side of CLEs also emerged. I explore one aspect of these changes in the next section.

Increasing Equitable Voice

The Focus of Practice (FoP) for this project was to better serve this diverse community by increasing equity of voice. During PAR Cycles One and Two, data emerged supporting the claim that participants felt their voices were heard and their wisdom honored through the CLE process. I also noted that my leadership practices shifted to look for ways to incorporate more voices more often. However, during PAR Cycle Three, it became clear that the effort to increase

equitable voice had spread beyond the CLEs and my own leadership. In the next section, I go through the many ways that members of all constituent groups both called for the inclusion of more voices in decision-making and felt empowered to share their own voices more often.

Sharing multiple voices more often. Throughout all three PAR cycles, members of all constituent groups expressed feelings of inclusion in decision-making processes while also noting that the inclusion of more voices was both important and positive. During PAR Cycle Three, I noted several instances where individuals sought the voices of others more often, including them in conversations as well as providing opportunities for them to be involved in decision-making. In the following sections, I share examples of the inclusion of more voices in several ways, including seeking student input in how to improve teacher/student relationships, altering the management of the Student Wellness Action Team (SWAT), and calls by students, teachers, and administrators for conversations across boundary lines. Finally, I also note the ways in which my practices and philosophies changed with regards to equity of voice.

Student relationship data. As a school, we adhere to the tenets of positive psychology (Seligman, 2011), including that positive relationships are a key component of well-being and education. Therefore, an ongoing goal for the middle school is to improve relationships between and among teachers and students, and during PAR Cycle Three, we sought student input on how to meet that goal. To this end, my co-counselors and I collected over 1600 descriptors from over 500 students, asking them what makes an ideal relationship with an adult at school. After categorizing them, we determined that they fell into seven clusters, illustrated in Figure 19. As a team, we were surprised but not shocked by the results and immediately began talking about how to share this information with teachers and students. As I recorded in a memo at the time, we

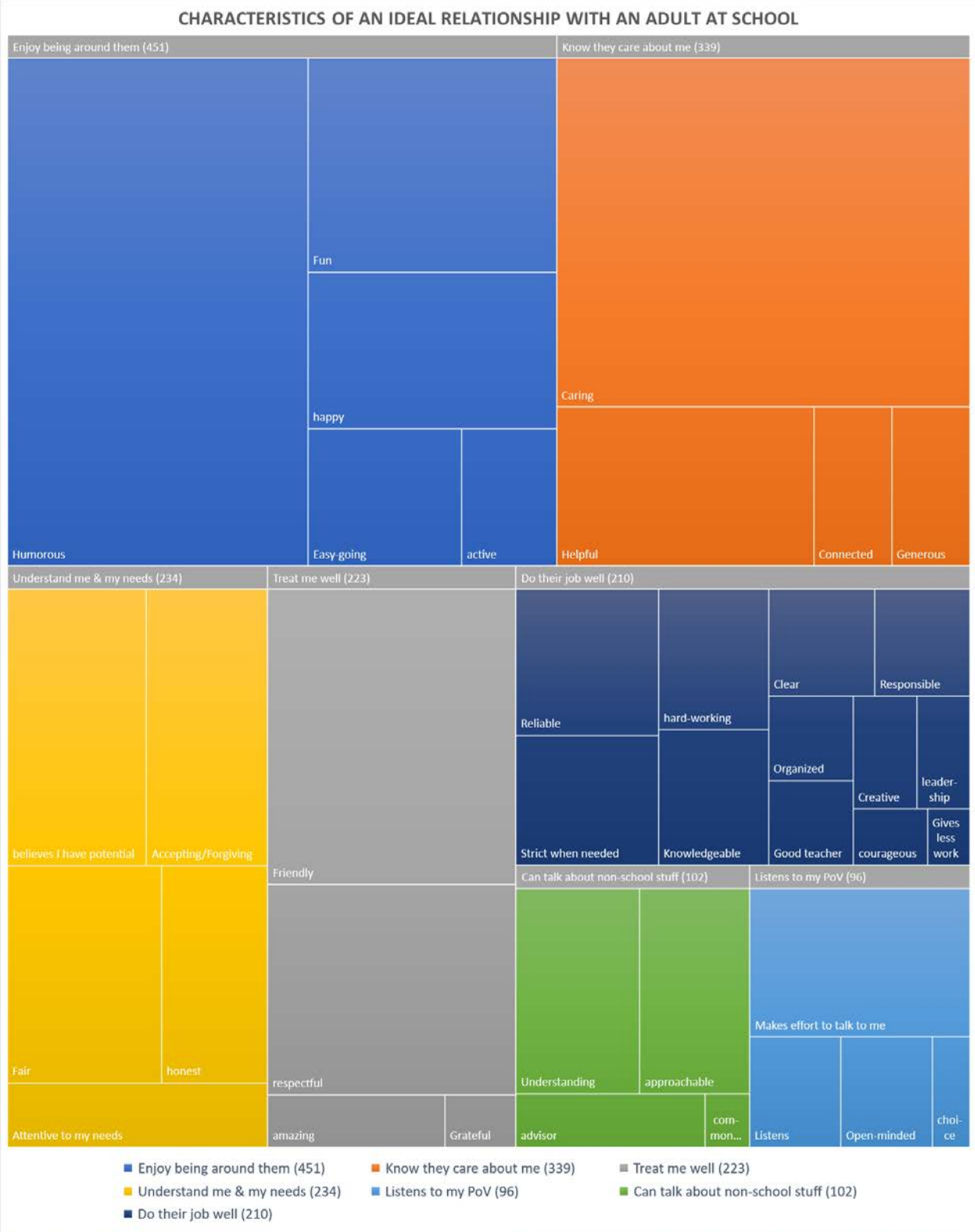

Figure19. Characteristics of an ideal relationship with an adult at school.

agreed that “this supports our wellness program as it’s clear that the day to day teaching of content is only a small part of building relationships with students. We really need to dig in and get to know them” (Memo, 10/18/2018). As PAR Cycle Three ended, my co-counselors and I were looking at the next faculty meeting and then the following homeroom lesson to share this information with faculty and students and discuss their reactions to it.

Through these homeroom visits, I also asked grade seven students for a place in which they feel the adult in charge of that space listens to their opinions and ideas. As shown in Table 22, all but ten of the 167 students were able to come up with a place, and nearly a third listed a specific teacher’s classroom. This data provided more evidence that students felt their voices were being heard by adults within the school. In addition, the act of asking for their input on both these measures was something we had not done before and provided evidence that as a school we were looking to incorporate student voice more often.

Student Wellness Action Teams (SWAT). As explained earlier in this chapter, my co-facilitator and I began the year establishing new goals for the grade 7 SWAT team as we wanted to use CLE pedagogies to help the students determine the direction they wanted to take the team. Through the course of the first few meetings, we gathered a few pieces of data which we then interpreted in order to plan our first project. In the second meeting, we came together in an opening circle and used a talking stick to share a one-word description of what it’s like to be a student at the school. After the second meeting, Ted, my co-facilitator, came up and shared that he would like to use a circle and talking stick in his math classes as he was trying to get all students to share their thinking during class and he liked the evenness of that model (Memo, 10/16/2018).

Table 2213

Where Students Feel Heard

Place	# of responses
classroom specific	57
counseling office	32
classroom generic	24
sports team	15
club	7
homeroom	7
library	5
admin office	4
cafeteria	3
camp	2
all	1
none	*3*
friends	*7*

Over the course of the first two meetings, the SWAT team participated in a World Café and then made sense of the information they shared. Illustrated by the italicized portions of Table 23, during the meaning-making session, students determined that a running theme across all questions was the need for students and teachers to have more non-class time together. Then they came up with ideas for how to do this, ultimately deciding on a weekly morning dodgeball game for interested seventh graders. A sub-committee then pitched this idea to the PE teachers and began advertising. At the close of PAR Cycle Three, the first dodgeball morning was held with an estimated 60% of student participation.

Constituents calling for more voices. While I was closely involved in seeking student input on relationships as well as revamping the SWAT team, I was not the only person whose practices changed. Throughout PAR Cycle Three, I noted the times in which administrators, teachers, and students looked outside their own constituent group or sub-group in order to get the opinions of others who may be impacted by their decisions. Noted in Table 24, I found that members of all constituent groups intentionally sought the voices of others in their practices. For example, Tiffany, the Mandarin teacher I worked closely with, shared that she had expanded the use of the circle from just homeroom (when she was intentionally focused on building relationships) into her academic classes. She shared that she had been trying to ensure that all students were involved in dialogue within her class, and this practice had increased the number of students who were speaking in her classes (Tiffany, Conversation Notes, 8/29/2018). Another teacher, who knew she would become an administrator the following year, talked about the importance of teachers understanding the points of view of students and parents. She shared that she was thinking about utilizing activities such as World Cafés to include those voices in the decision-making process in order to bridge subject knowledge and knowledge about the whole

Table 23

SWAT World Café Answers and Themes

Ideas for SWAT	# of dots	Improving Student/Student relationships	# of dots	Improving Teacher/Student relationships	# of dots
opportunities to meet each other more	*4*	*include everyone*	*3*	*interact with each other*	*2*
more group activities	*1*	respect others	1	curious about their subject	1
fundraisers	3	introduce new student	2	Be in many activities	2
dances	*1*	understand everyone's personality	3	*more student/teacher interactions org at school*	*2*
More PE	3	don't be shy	1	*teacher/student activities*	*5*
More study period	7	be more open to making friends	2	ask questions and teachers answer	1
More lunch	1	*More group events (dances)*	*3*	find teachers with common interests	1
Fewer people at lunch		Encourage others to make new friends	2	behave	
Less tests	4	*More group work*	*6*	follow school rules	1
		Don't be a bully	3	be enthusiastic	1
		More socializing time	*5*	Listen to each other's opinions	1
		Meet people you don't normally talk to	*4*		

Table 2414

Voice Codes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin/Cnslr
Voice: Call for increase	2				
Voice: Positive/valuable	2	2	1	1	1
Voice: lack of equity	1				
Voice: seeking		4	1		1
Voice: seeking convos			2	1	
Voice: increase achieved	1	3			
Voice: effort to increase	1		1		
Voice: own empowered		1		4	

child (Annie, Conversation Notes, 9/12/2018). In addition, members of the CPR team noted that they continued to think and talk about homework with others. Sarah, a student member of the CPR team, shared that she continued to try to talk with more people about homework to get their perspectives (Conversation Notes, 8/29/2018). Paula, the parent member of the CPR team, shared that even after the CLEs, she had "been able to talk to peer parents and kids about this topic whenever I have a chance. It adds the depths of my communication with them and gradually they turn to me when they have questions about homework," (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018).

My own learning. An important part of this PAR project was my own learning and the changes in my own practices with regards to sharing voices. My memos, as well as the feedback from my ECU coaches and professors, showed a clear progression of my own understanding of the importance of equity of voice. As I noted in a memo during PAR Cycle Three, I began this doctoral program thinking about the role that cultural differences play in people's perspectives in the school, but I looked more closely at how these differences impact voices being shared and heard. "Beyond realizing the extent to which [English proficiency and familiarity with international schools] limit parental input and access, I have begun to advocate for inclusion of more voices in decision-making and have used my influence to increase participation in different arenas such as wellness, the accreditation process, and of course, the CLEs regarding homework in the middle school" (Memo, 9/23/2018). My instructors also noted the importance of these changes in my leadership. My instructor, Edward, commented on the same memo, "Lori, you are demonstrating that you see the inequity, you understand the inequity and as a leader you're working to interrupt the inequity," (Memo Comment, 10/6/2018).

Taken together, there are many examples of efforts to increase student voice as well as to seek the perspectives of others before making decisions. These examples continued well beyond the topic of homework and the CLE events, indicating that the positive experiences and boundary crossings that occurred during those events had lasting influence on the practices of those involved.

Empowering our own voices. The lasting influence of the CLE experience on constituents extended beyond efforts to hear the voices of others more often. Indeed, as noted in Table 25, members of all constituent groups noted that they saw themselves differently and felt empowered to speak up and share their own opinions much more often.

Tiffany, the Mandarin department chair, noted feeling good about the work she was doing with her team and that she was seeing a shift in the effectiveness of her leadership of the Mandarin team. Having many different people telling them what to do (K-12 Mandarin coordinator, curriculum coordinator, outside consultant, and the principal), she was having a hard time knowing what to do. However, she began to collaborate with her team more and was feeling empowered to share her own interpretations of how the various mandates fit together. In addition, she felt empowered to speak up when things were in opposition to each other (Tiffany, Conversation Notes, 9/14/2018).

In our final CPR meeting, I asked group members how their voices had been amplified and what they saw as the most helpful parts of the process. Sarah, student member, noted that "the CLE process helped me be able to speak up," while Paula, parent member, noted, "I feel positive and empowered that I'm part of a meaning[ful] process of school policy shaping," (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018). Allison, counselor member of the team, noted that she came through this process with greater confidence in her opinions, having found unity with others. During a

Table 25

Empowerment Codes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin/Cnslr
Emotions, Positive: Empowered		1		2	
Voice: own empowered	2	4		4	
Shift in thinking re: self	3	5	1	2	

separate conversation, Steven, another student member, also reflected on his own leadership during the second CLE, noting that he was nervous, but he had a positive experience leading the final circle (Conversation, 10/15/2018). He also went on to note that he was feeling more empowered to talk to his friends about his concerns about their gaming behavior, and he also shared that he was taking on mentoring roles to help younger players on his various sports teams.

I also experienced shifts in thinking about myself and feelings of empowerment to share my voice and act on my instincts during this cycle. For example, I felt more confident in myself as a leader and advocated to be considered for an administrative position. I also felt compelled to share my emerging findings with the head of school, which I would not have done previously. Even though I did not get that position, I left feeling empowered to continue to let people know what I stand for and what I want for myself and the school (Memo, 8/19/2018).

Overall, it is clear from the preceding examples and data that after the CLEs, efforts to increase equitable voice and empower the voices of constituents continued. These efforts occurred both with and without my leadership, and members of all constituent groups reported feeling interested in hearing the opinions of others as well as empowered to share their own voices more often.

Conversations are Critical

An emerging theme from PAR Cycles One and Two was one of learning from others. During the preceding cycles, the evidence supported the idea that noticing and finding value in varied perspectives as well as making connections to others led to shifts in thinking. During PAR Cycle Three, those shifts in thinking led to tangible changes in policies, practices, and philosophies. However, the data continued to support the idea that those connections and conversations with others are a critical part of the reform process. Illustrated in Table 26,

Table 26

Conversation Codes

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin/Cnslr
CLE: Extension/building	1	3			1
CLE: Next		1		1	
CLE: Recognizing Purpose		1			
CLE: Value Process		4	2	2	
CLE: Honoring wisdom		1			
CLE: Unique		1			
CLE: important/powerful		1			1
CLE: worth the time		1			
CLE: Ownership of process		1			
CLE: connection to Wellness	1	2			
CLE: connection to mission	2				
CLE: pedagogy					1
Conversations critical	3	1	2		1

Table 26 (continued)

Code	Memos	CPR Mtg	Teachers	Students	Admin/Cnslr
Conversations: lack=problem	1				
Boundary Crossing: connection			1		
Boundary Crossing: Across power lines	1	3	1		
Boundary Crossing: Across cultures	1		1		
Boundary Crossing: Learning/Unity		3			

constituents continued to talk about the power of the CLE process, and many specifically noted that conversations are critical in various reform efforts.

When I asked the CPR team to list the top two most helpful parts of the CLE process (including our planning), they each included conversations in one of their answers. For example, Tracy, the teacher member, said that "hearing the opinions of each group [helped her] to better understand their perspective," and Steven, a student member, said that the conversations "help [the school] be able to also gain a perspective on students, realize their concerns and step towards changes," (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018). In addition, Tiffany, the Mandarin teacher I worked with, noted that during the CLEs where teachers and students were more equal, students were more straightforward in sharing their thoughts than they are in class (Conversation Notes, 9/14/2018).

Tiffany and I also talked about the importance of her conversations with her colleagues and how those conversations were shifting her thinking about them as well as their work together. In an early meeting, she shared that her team was working together more closely than in previous years, and at first, she attributed this solely to the addition of two new members to the team (Conversation Notes, 9/14/2018). However, at a later meeting, she mentioned that both new and old members were having more discussions, and even old members were working better with an outside consultant with whom they have previously clashed (Tiffany, Conversation Notes, 10/1/2018).

Finally, constituents continued to note that crossing boundaries often led to shifts in thinking. For example, during the opening circle of the final CPR meeting, we shared recent examples of learning from others. Sarah, student member, shared her experience working backstage crew for the musical with a senior she did not previously know, saying "she's really

inspiring…she always takes initiative to solve problems. These things always go wrong in the shows and I'm trying to be like her and take initiative and when I see something goes wrong," (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018). Allison, counselor, also reminisced on the CLEs saying, "one of the things I loved about the actual events was those sorts of a-ha moments when you had … [a student] talking to [a teacher], or a parent talking to a student, and they were like 'oh really? Oh, well, we think the same' or 'I've never thought about it from that perspective.' Just that opportunity to learn was so valuable and so unique" (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018).

While conversations happen all the time, it is these specific, focused conversations that honor wisdom and context that emerged as critical to reform. The data in the preceding sections support the conclusion that when certain conditions are created, members of different constituent groups cross boundaries and build connections with each other in order to have conversations about important topics, and as a result, changes occur. These changes impact the policies, practices, and philosophies related to the topics of conversation (such as homework), but they also lead to more conversations, which increases the number of voices being shared and feelings of empowerment to speak up. This conclusion is closely related to my research questions, which I chronicle in the next section.

Summary

In this chapter, I explored the ongoing impact of conversations between and among constituents during and after CLEs. What began as insights that emerged in PAR Cycle One and became emerging themes in PAR Cycle Two solidified into the findings during PAR Cycle Three. While a CLE did not take place during PAR Cycle Three, the inquiry and dialogue continued through a variety of activities. The data support the findings that this work contributed to major shifts in policies, practices, and philosophies in the area of homework and learning as

well as increased equity of voice. More specifically, I found evidence of transfer into changes to homework policies, adjusted teacher practices in giving homework, and shifts in thinking and philosophies regarding homework and learning. In addition, I found that as I worked with others to include voices of constituents more often, this transferred into others were doing the same, often seeing conversations that they had not previously. At the same time, I found that members of all constituent groups felt more empowered to share their own voices more often. Finally, the data supports the conclusion that authentic conversations between and among constituents, such as those occurring during the CLEs, are critical to reform.

In the next chapter, I return to the literature and my original Theory of Action (ToA) to re-analyze my findings with the work of others and refine my theory and framework. I then discuss the implications of this study on my school context and my own leadership as well as the wider practice, policy, and research implications.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Throughout the course of this participatory action research (PAR) project, the goal of increasing equity of voice among all constituents in the decision-making process in order to better serve a culturally diverse student and family population remained at the forefront. In this final chapter, I first provide an overview of the project including the context, research methodology, and findings. I then examine the findings through the lens of the extant literature, providing my conclusions and an updated framework for understanding how to better serve diverse populations. I then turn to the implications of the project on practice, policy, research, and the EdD framework. Finally, I share the implications of this work on my own leadership development and conclude by revisiting my research questions and look toward the future.

Project Overview

Over the course of three cycles, spread over three academic semesters, I worked with a group of Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPRs) in order to plan, implement, and determine the outcomes of a series of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs). Collecting and analyzing data from a number of sources, I found that authentic conversations between and among members of different constituent groups which began in the CLEs led to continued conversations as well as changes in school policies and altered practices and philosophies of members of all constituent groups. In this section, I explain the context of the project then summarize the focus of practice and theory of action that guided this project. I then share information about the participants, including the CPR group and the diverse group of administrators, teachers, parents, and students who attended the CLEs and continued conversations afterward. Finally, I turn to an explanation of the cycles of research and the findings of the study.

The setting for this project was the middle school division of the international school in Taiwan where I work. In general, members of this school community see it as an independent school in an international setting, meaning that as a community, we compare ourselves to independent schools in America. However, only a small portion of our student and family population are traditional expatriate families from countries around the world while a much large portion considers themselves Taiwanese. The vast majority of faculty and administrators are from Western English-speaking countries (e.g., America, Canada, Australia, and Great Britain). Unlike many international schools that have a good deal of turnover, a large population of students (and faculty) stay for a long time and many transfer from other schools on-island. There is a much smaller group of students who join the school from other countries. The school is well-established and well-resourced, priding itself on its academic rigor. Most parents have college degrees, but many were educated in the East. Nearly 100% of graduates go straight to college, the majority of which are American colleges. This is both the school's standard and the parents' expectations.

When I began this project, I wanted to address inequities of voice existing between different constituent sub-groups within the school as I believed that these inequities create similar inequities in how well we meet the needs of students. While several observations and conversations over the years contributed to this belief, it solidified more clearly after I conducted a Research Learning Exchange with members of all constituent groups prior to PAR Cycle One. Illustrated in Figure 1 in Chapter 1, there are several factors that affect equity of voice within the school decision-making process, including differences between Eastern and Western cultures, familiarity with international schools, faculty understanding of student cultures and needs, and current decision-making practices. I aimed to utilize CLEs, a tool that honors the wisdom of

people and power of place (Guajardo et. al, 2016), to increase the equity of voice among all constituents in the decision-making process in order to better serve a culturally diverse student and family population.

The participants in this PAR study were members of all constituent groups within the school: parents, students, faculty, and administrators. The CPR group which helped plan and implement the CLEs consisted of two students, one parent, one teacher, the middle school associate principal, another counselor and me. Among other tasks, as a group, we worked together to ensure that a diverse group of parents, students, teachers, and administrators/counselors attended the CLEs. These participants represented the various educational and cultural backgrounds that exist within the school community, as well as different academic strengths or teaching subjects and varied extracurricular interests.

Once I selected my FoP, I investigated the extant literature (see Chapter 2). This led to the development of my theory of action: If representatives from all constituent groups come together to discuss topics relevant to the educational experience of students, information from these meetings will (a) drive the overall direction and concrete actions on those topics; (b) in turn, impact the ways we share information between and among the school and families; and (c) enhance participants' understanding of diverse perspectives. My research questions sought to determine the relevance of my theory. My overarching research question was: Through the implementation of CLE, to what extent do we *increase equitable voice* among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the decision-making process at the school, thereby better serving a *culturally diverse* student and family population? The four research sub-questions included:

- To what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants?

- How do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling?
- To what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers?
- How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?

In order to answer my research questions, I engaged in three iterative PAR cycles. Illustrated in Figure 20, each PAR cycle informed and influenced the next. In the first cycle, I put together the CPR team, and together we planned and implemented a CLE on the topic of homework with a diverse group of participants. Explained more fully in Chapter 5, homework was pre-determined as the most likely topic for the CLEs as it was an area that administrators were keen to adjust, and it incited rich conversations during the pilot CLE. While initially homework was not the topic that most appealed to me, the CPR group (including me) accepted it because we agreed that our views about it are largely based on our own experiences with it, which are inherently cultural, and at that time, feedback from constituents about homework was disproportionate in its cultural origin. Administrators were hearing from what we knew was a vocal minority of parents and students but making decisions based on what we thought the less vocal majority wanted. However, we knew that it was a frequent topic of conversation for members of all constituent groups and cultural backgrounds. Being ripe for change and important to all constituent groups, we agreed that it was the best topic to use to bring constituents together for discussions.

After conducting the CLE, the CPR group reviewed the documents and data, sharing the themes with administrators and faculty. We then used this information to plan another CLE during PAR Cycle Two. The second CLE was also on the topic of homework, going deeper into

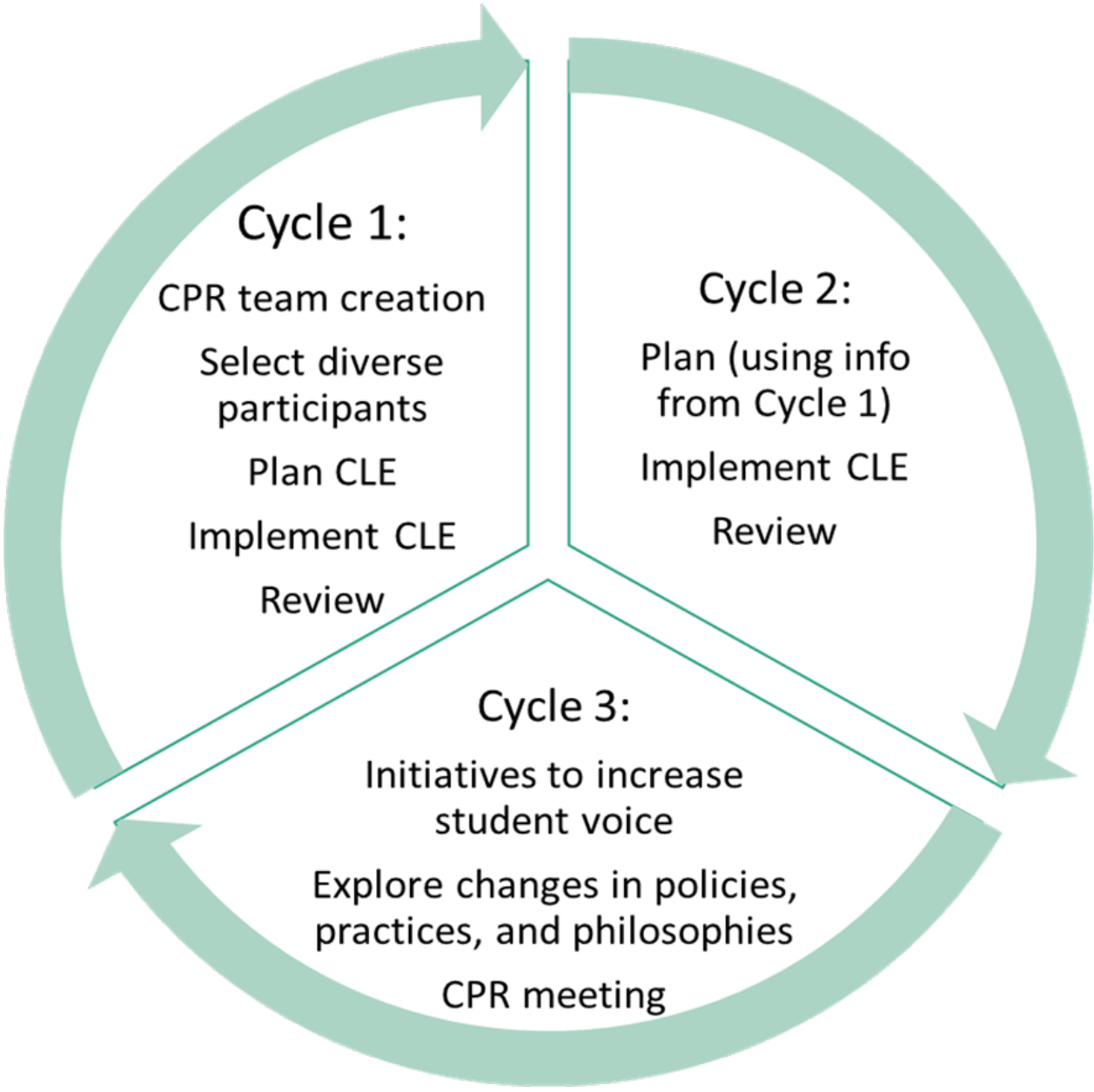

Figure 20. PAR cycles of research.

the themes that emerged during PAR Cycle One. During Cycle Two, I also kept track of conversations and meetings about homework and its connection to learning and wellness. The themes from PAR Cycle Two then guided the work during PAR Cycle Three where I set out to determine the impact of CLE participation on the policies and practices of the school as well as individual constituents. I examined the changes to homework policies, practices, and philosophies while also engaging in and examining efforts to increase student voice. I also met with the CPR team again to share the findings and discuss the changes and growth they saw in themselves.

During each PAR cycle, I also collected and analyzed data from a number of sources. Listed in Table 4 in Chapter 4, these data sources included documents generated during CLEs, interviews, and notes from conversations with participants from each constituent group, and meeting notes and agendas. Member checks were also embedded in each cycle as the CPR group helped to analyze data and "check" my conclusions during our CPR meetings. The data collected provided information on the topic of homework as well as on changes that occurred as a result of participating in these types of conversations. At the same time, throughout each PAR Cycle, I chronicled my own leadership development through reflective memos.

Each cycle, I coded and analyzed the data collected during that cycle using both inductive and deductive coding methods. Expressed in Figure 21, through the coding and sense-making process each cycle, I drew themes from the data. During PAR Cycle One, the data showed that learning from others occurred, participants redefined homework needs, and there was ripeness for change. These emerging themes further solidified during PAR Cycle Two when the data once again supported the conclusion that conditions were created for learning from others to occur,

Figure 21. Findings from each PAR cycle.

and there was movement towards changes in philosophies, practices, and policies. Finally, these themes became findings during PAR Cycle Three when continued analysis of data supported the conclusion that conversations are critical to change, changes occurred in practices, policies, and philosophies related to homework and learning, and transfer also occurred in relation to equity of voice. Collectively, the data support the findings that when members of different constituent groups come together for conversations in ways that honor wisdom and context, people better understand each other's perspectives and shifts in thinking about the topic occur. At the same time, ideas about others and the school also shifted, leading to changes in practices, philosophies, and policies about the topic of homework as well as the inclusion of more voices in decision-making processes. I explore these findings more fully in the next section by comparing them to the literature, explaining how authentic conversations are critical to change, and presenting a new framework for equitable and sustained reform.

Discussion of Findings

This PAR project generated a number of key findings. In this section, I reanalyze the findings by comparing them to specific elements in the literature including diverse perspectives and learning from others, equity of voice, and my chosen methodology for change: Community Learning Exchanges. I then share the reasoning behind my conclusion that authentic conversations are a critical component of change. Finally, I offer a new, advanced framework for understanding the elements of a reform process that better serves a diverse population.

Findings and the Extant Literature

The findings from my PAR project are largely consistent with the extant literature. In this section, I explore each of the relevant areas from my literature review: understanding diversity,

equity of voice, and the CLE framework. In each area, I explain how my findings fit with and/or depart from the assertions and findings of others.

Understanding diversity. A good deal of literature exists to explain and help people understand the differences between various cultures and the impact of cross-cultural experiences (Li, 2012; Pollack & Van Reken, 2009; Taylor, 2014). As the context for this study was an international school made up of constituents with many different cross-cultural experiences, this literature was an important starting place. While neither the specific differences between Eastern and Western cultures nor the effects of cross-cultural experiences appeared in the findings of my study, there was evidence that constituents noticed variations in perspectives and crossed cultural boundaries during and after the CLEs. In addition, understanding these differences provided a foundation for my work with the CPR group and our careful selection of constituents to attend the CLEs.

Similarly, another important part of understanding diversity is helping others to expand their worldview and intercultural sensitivity. Taylor (2014) examined several assessment tools and predicted that intercultural sensitivity and the potential for more successful group interactions would be heightened through "a greater understanding of self and of difference…coupled with exposure to 'the other' through shared activities and goals" (p. 33). This sensitivity is also called global competence, which the OECD defined as "the capacity to analyze global and intercultural issues critically and from multiple perspectives, to understand how differences affect perceptions, judgments, and ideas of self and others, and to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with others from different backgrounds on the basis of a shared respect for human dignity" (Taylor, 2014, p. 4). Presented in Tables 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, and 21 across Chapters Five through Seven, the findings from this study certainly support the

idea that authentic conversations during and after CLEs helped expand participants' understanding of varied perspectives and allowed for boundary crossings in ways that honored the wisdom of others and resulted in alliances and shifts in thinking. Finally, Boix Mansilla (2016) further developed the idea of global competence into four global thinking dispositions that schools can foster in students. These dispositions were closely related to several of the key findings of this PAR project, as explained in Table 27.

Equity of voice. A major finding of my PAR project was that equity of voice increased through the CLEs as well as the conversations that continued long after the CLEs. In addition to purposefully including more voices in the CLEs that led to changes in policies, practices, and philosophies, I found that members of all constituent groups looked to include more voices more often, but also that they felt more empowered to share their own voices. When comparing these findings to the literature I reviewed in Chapter 2, I noted many similarities. Mitra (2008) found that when students and educators came together in partnership, the students provide perspectives that educators had not considered while also helping to clear up misconceptions. As illustrated in Tables 9 and 15, I also found that shifts in thinking occurred with students and educators come together.

In addition, after their meta-analysis of the effects of parent involvement initiatives, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that the most effective initiatives included efforts to build relationships, respect differences and foster a partnership between home and school. Tabulated in Tables 8 and 14, the findings of this PAR study also indicate that our efforts to bring a more diverse group of parents into the decision-making process led to increased connectedness, including feelings of alliance, inclusion, and honored wisdom.

Table 27

Findings Relevant to Global Thinking Dispositions

Global Thinking Disposition	Related Findings	Table Reference
Inquiry about the world	CLEs included collaborative inquiry into homework. Participants also expressed desire to continue that inquiry in future CLEs.	11, Appendix H & K
Understanding multiple points of view	Constituents noted variations in perspectives and stated the points of views of others.	7, 13
Respectful dialogue	Constituents called for the sharing of more voices more often.	7, 13, 24
Responsible action	As a result of the CLEs and ensuing conversations, changes in policies, practices, and philosophies occurred.	10, 19 20, 21, 23

Finally, studies of teacher voice found that efforts to include teachers in the decision-making processes, particularly when these efforts include collaboration time and the establishment of a shared vision, led to improved teaching and learning for all (Huffman et al., 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). In this PAR project, I found that collaboration towards a common goal, occurring between and among teachers and parents, students, and administrators, led to shifts in thinking and ultimately, positive changes in philosophies, practices, and policies, as denoted in Tables 19-21 in Chapter 7.

As I reviewed the literature connected to equity of voice, I noted that the vast majority of these studies had been conducted in Western schools. Knowing that Eastern ideas about learning and the importance of voice are quite different than Western ideas (Li, 2002), I was interested to find out if there would be differences in the outcomes of efforts to increase equity of voice in a more cross-cultural setting. However, the findings of this PAR project extend the idea that it is important to authentically include constituents in decision-making processes to a cross-cultural setting in an Eastern location.

CLE framework. Finally, my literature review examined CLEs as an existing framework to bring together the ideas of how to understand and honor diversity while also including the voices of different constituents in decision-making processes in equitable ways. While the CPR team and I used the CLE axioms and theory to guide our planning of each CLE, our findings throughout all three cycles also provide additional support for each axiom, as described in Table 28. However, I would slightly alter the wording of the final axiom to take out the word “locals.” Within internationals schools, the term “locals” denotes a specific subset of the population, leaving out other important constituents. Throughout this PAR project, a major goal was to bring different members of the community together, whether they be local or expat,

Table 28

Findings Relevant to CLE Axioms

CLE Axiom	Findings	Table Reference
Learning and leadership are a dynamic social process	Learning from others occurred throughout the CLEs, and this learning affected policy and practice changes made by individuals as well as the leadership team	8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21
Conversations are critical and central pedagogies	During the CLEs, but also long after they ended, constituents continued to describe conversations as being a critical element of their success.	26
The people closest to the issues are best suited to discover answers to local questions and problems	Homework has been a frequent topic of discussion in the school, but it was not until we brought students and parents together with teachers and administrators that policies and practices began to change.	10, 19, 20, 21
Crossing boundaries is how we learn and develop	Boundary crossings across power lines and cultures led to shifts in thinking about the topic, others, the school, and ourselves	8, 9, 14, 15, 26
Hope and change are built on the assets and dreams of locals and their communities	A critical element of the design of the CLEs was to improve homework for *this* community. In the CLEs, we determined the critical issues in this community and then made changes based on that information.	10, 19, 20, 21, 23

adult or student, new or long-term. Through the CLEs, we were able to bring a diverse group of community members together to share perspectives and develop a common understanding of the topic of homework and its place within this particular cross-cultural community.

Next, I explore the ways that my findings relate to each other. Specifically, I bring the findings together to expand upon the idea that the conversations described in this study were special in both process and outcome.

Authentic Conversations Lead to Change

Reviewing the findings from each of the three PAR cycles together and through the lenses of the extant literature, it is clear that there are a few major takeaways from this project. First, the conversations that occurred during and as a result of the CLEs were different than the majority of conversations between and among parents, teachers, students, and administrators. These conversations were *meaningful* as they were often described as important and worthwhile (see Tables 6 & 12), and *authentic* as the participants were honest and connected with each other (see Tables 8 & 14). These conversations also led to changes in perspectives and actions not just on the topic of homework but in other areas as well. As illustrated in Figure 22, the evidence supports the conclusion that there are three crucial elements to creating the conditions for authentic conversations that lead to change. These elements are: *honoring wisdom and context, building trust,* and *focused content* of the conversations. While a certain amount of trust likely existed in this context before the CLEs, by honoring the wisdom of all participants and focusing on the experts in the room who know what this community needs and wants, we were able to further increase trust and allow participants to share stories that brought their experiences and perspectives to life. Then by focusing on a specific topic that was both ripe for change and relevant to everyone in the room, this led towards action or change based on those authentic

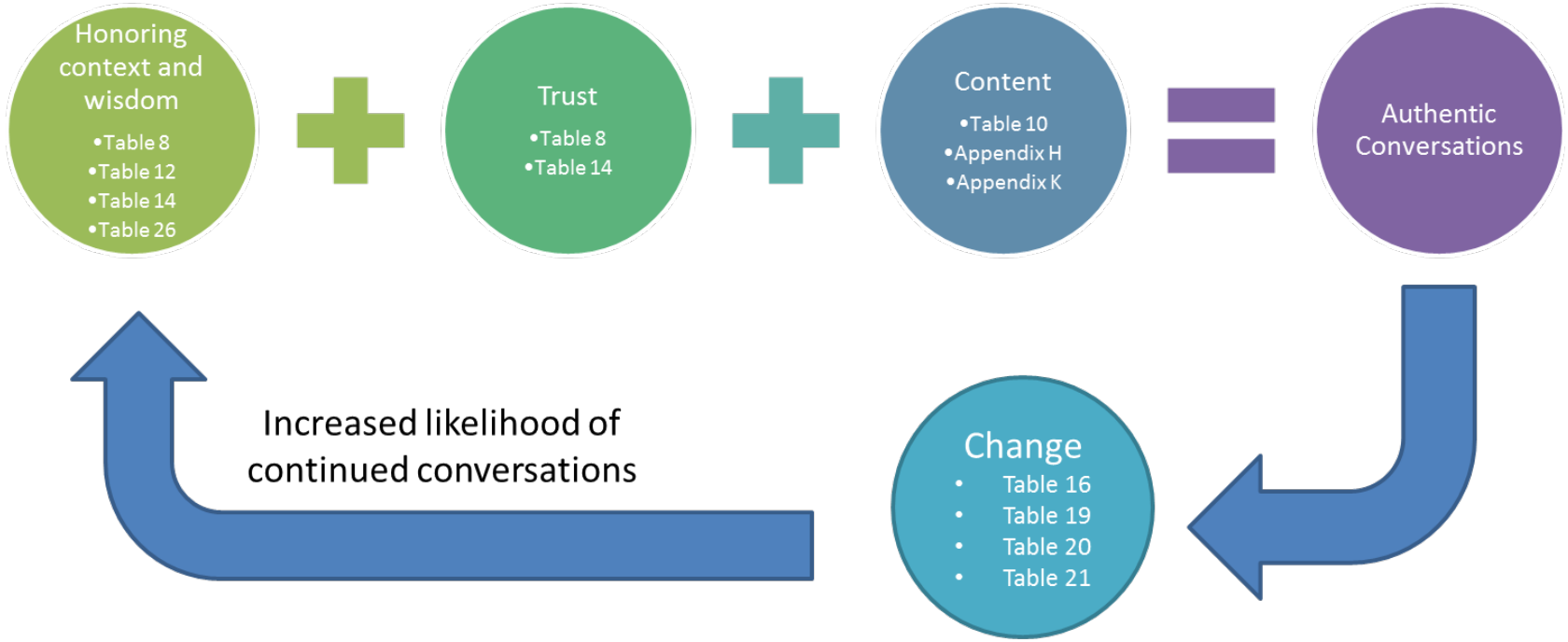

Figure 22. Authentic conversations.

conversations. In addition, as each table referenced in Figure 22 shows, these authentic conversations did not begin or end during the CLEs. Instead, the elements of authentic conversations were also present in the CPR group meetings and conversations that led to the CLEs as well as the conversations that took place after the CLEs ended. These continued conversations are particularly important as the CLE process created the time and space for authentic conversations, but true reform does not happen in such a short amount of time. Therefore, it is crucial to note that CLE participants continued to discuss homework with other participants and non-participants in formal and informal ways, hashing out their opinions, trying out new practices, and working together to adjust policies. At the same time, they also initiated similar conversations about other topics more often and included more voices in those conversations than they did prior to participating in the CLEs. It is this sustaining effect, where conversations and therefore the reform efforts continued, that led me to revisit and rework the initial framework I laid out in Figure 9 in Chapter 2. In the next section, I explain my new framework for equitable and sustained reform in educational communities.

Framework for Equitable and Sustained Reform in Diverse School Communities

Based on the findings and my new understanding of this process, I reimagined the framework for equitable reform that I established after my initial literature review. Illustrated in Figure 23, the new framework begins with the selection of a topic ripe for change. As illustrated in the example of homework in this PAR project, that topic must be one that is relevant to constituents, and those with decision-making power must be willing to make changes in that area. When determining how to approach the topic, leaders should consider the multitude of factors influencing the perspectives and opinions of individuals within an educational community. These factors include, but are not limited to, cultural experiences and ideals,

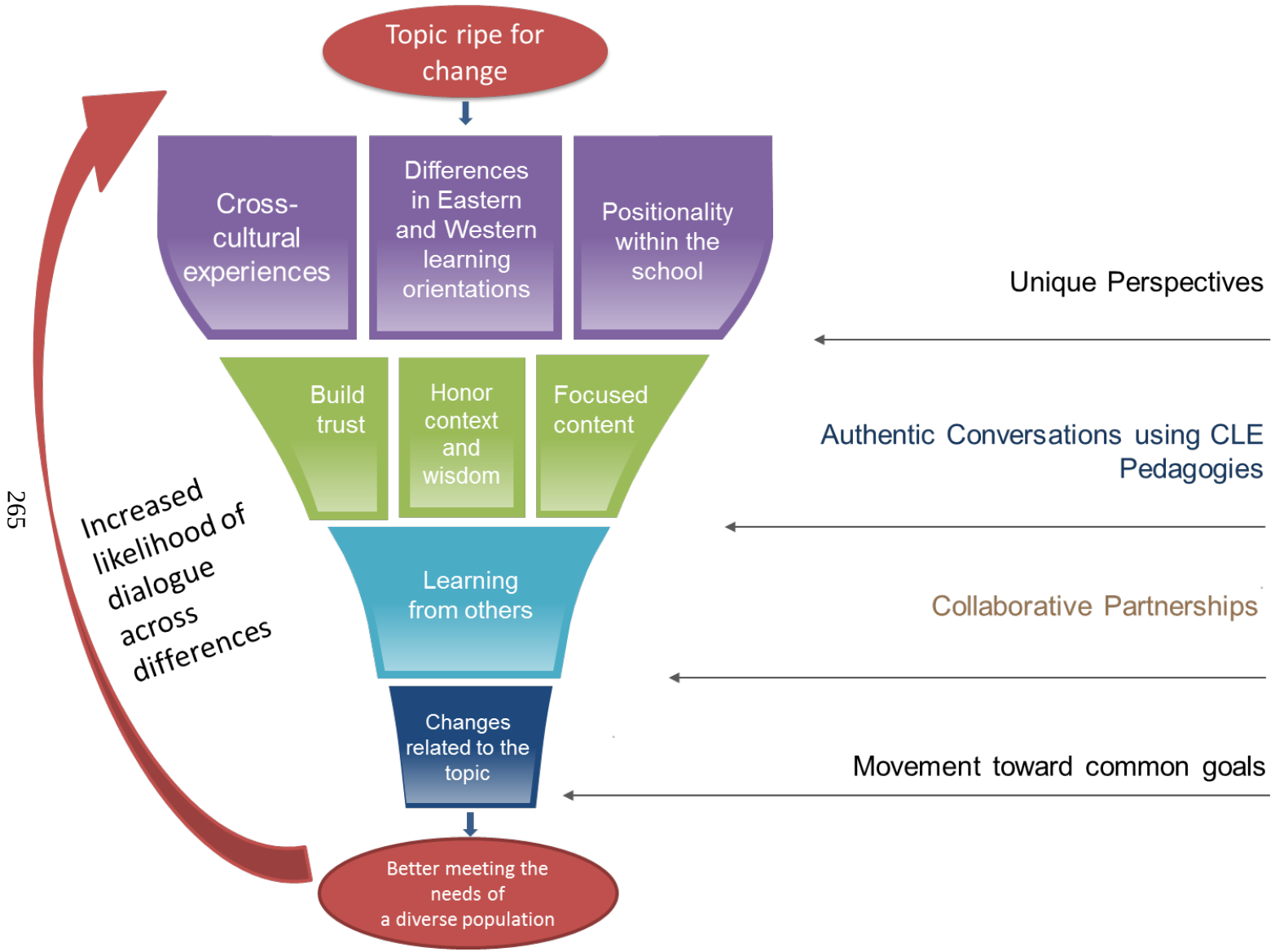

Figure 23. Framework for equitable and sustained reform in education.

positionality within the school, and individual experiences. In order to best serve a diverse population, particularly one that includes large variations in these factors, educational leaders must engage in authentic conversations with members of the population, not just so those leaders can be knowledge-holders, but so that members of the community engage with and understand each other's perspectives and stories. These authentic and collaborative conversations, which are based on trust, honored wisdom, and focused content, result in multi-directional feedback and learning from others. This learning translates into changes in practices, policies, and philosophies at both the individual and whole school level that better meet the needs of the population. In addition to the changes to the topic originally targeted, going through this process makes participants more likely to seek out conversations and dialogue with others who are different than them, thereby perpetuating the cycle. Continued conversations and dialogue across difference lead to sustained change and engagement with others as they allow for the ability to tweak and "check" new learning and practices with others, including those they impact. In that way, success can breed success and lead to continued use of the framework in the reform process. Finally, it is important to note that the framework is not linear but cyclical and can be entered at any point. For example, conversations using CLE pedagogies could lead to new learning and the establishment of a topic ripe for change that could then go back through the process.

Summary

On a small scale, this project highlighted one example of a process that an international middle school went through in order to make better and more informed decisions about homework. On a larger scale, the findings illuminate the ways in which conscious efforts to bring constituents together to have authentic conversations with each other led to changes in the

decisions about homework as well as changes to the ways that we make changes and include multiple voices in the decision-making processes. As a result of these findings, I presented a new framework that illustrates the ways in which educational leaders interested in equitable and sustained reform can bring constituents from different backgrounds and positions within the community together to have authentic conversations that result in learning from others, movement towards a common goal, and continued conversations that help perpetuate the process. In the next section, I share the implications that can be drawn from this study, both within and outside of this context.

Implications

While the conclusions drawn in this study are specific to this context alone, there are implications that may be drawn for practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers in other contexts. In the following sections, I explain the implications for practices and policies both within the school and in other educational institutions. I then share other potential topics of study in further research, and finally, I end with implications for the ECU doctoral framework.

Practice

Through this process, we learned that we were making decisions based on what we thought we knew about our diverse constituency rather than getting that information from the constituents themselves. By bringing a diverse group of students, parents, teachers, and administrators together, we were able to better understand the issue of homework, but more than that, we were able to better understand each other. This led to changes in practices related to homework, but also in practices related to equity of voice. Members of all constituent groups are more likely to speak up to call for other voices in decision-making conversations, but they are also more likely to feel empowered to share their own voices and opinions. To continue this

work, teachers and administrators should seek out ways to systematically include the voices of students and parents more often when making decisions that affect them.

As Allison, a counselor, put it in our final CPR meeting, “CLEs are now a known and valued tool within this community,” (CPR Meeting, 10/19/2018). A logical next step is to utilize CLEs and their pedagogies in many different areas of the school in order to ensure that we are hearing more voices, not just the naturally vocal ones. There are already several topics which are ripe for change and would be well-served through a CLE, such as understanding the effectiveness of our wellness program, improving our transition programs, and exploring new middle school schedule options.

Within other international schools, but also in other educational settings, the findings of this PAR project imply that leaders and other professionals who embrace a thoughtful and collaborative change process *with* rather than *for* their constituents can more effectively serve their diverse populations. Particularly when cultural backgrounds and learning orientations differ as widely as personal experiences, it is not enough to talk with students or parents individually. They must come together in ways that engender trust, honor their wisdom, and allow them to talk with each other about topics of interest. In addition, leaders should regularly find time to listen to the stories and lived experiences of all constituents in order to better understand the context in which they lead.

There are many potential problems of practice that might lend themselves to utilizing this framework. For example, a new leader or a leader in a school where the demographics are changing might use this framework to bring members of different populations together to refine or even define priorities and goals. Or others with a new initiative handed down from above could utilize CLE pedagogies to bring those affected together to learn from each other and work

together on how to implement the initiative in that specific context. In this case, honoring wisdom and developing relational trust through authentic conversations would likely lead to additional conversations and support as teachers began to try and troubleshoot the initiatives.

Policy

As a result of this PAR project, the school's homework policy shifted to address several concerns that emerged during the CLEs. In addition, a few teachers tweaked their own classroom policies as a result of their CLE experiences. While no formal policies were adjusted to systemize the use of CLE pedagogies, several elements, like the use of circles and interactive learning structures as well as a focus on assets rather than deficits, dovetail nicely with our wellness program. However, the school should consider ways to ensure that multiple voices are included in the decision-making processes for policies and practices that affect them. Utilizing my position as a leader in the middle and already-existing structures, I can lead by example by beginning the meetings I lead with a circle and ensuring that formal feedback processes, such as our annual counseling department survey, are available in multiple languages. In addition, teachers should consider the ways in which they engage voices within their classrooms as CLE pedagogies may help them to draw out the less vocal and honor the wisdom of their students in ways that help develop higher-order thinking as well as social-emotional competencies such as empathy.

Other educational institutions should also take heed of the alliances that were built and shifts in thinking that occurred through the CLE process that honored the wisdom of participants and power of the specific place. While it is not practical to make every decision through this methodology, educational leaders in other institutions would better serve their particular context and constituents by establishing policies that systematically bring people together for authentic

conversations that honor their unique perspectives and lived experiences. In addition, schools should consider how they include multiple voices, particularly parent and student voices, in their current policies for introducing and evaluating their programs. Are members of all constituent groups included in accreditation processes? How are members of different cultural and educational backgrounds welcomed into the school community and culture? Finally, time is limited within even the most well-resourced schools, but schools should consider ways to carve out dedicated time for professionals to talk and collaborate with each other about their work. This collaboration is important not just for those teaching similar content, but also across boundaries such as school divisions, subject areas, and years of experience.

Research

This was a short-term study with a limited scope in one international middle school. Therefore, follow-up studies might include different or larger contexts and/or longer-term investigations. One such follow-up study within this context might be to examine the lasting impact of CLE participation as well as the effectiveness of the policy and practice changes that occurred as a result of this work. In addition, broadening the context to the entire school rather than just the middle school would allow us to determine how similar methodologies might be used with students of varying ages and teachers and parents with different educational priorities.

One could also take the framework I presented and use it to determine the sustainability of reform that happens through this process. For example, researchers could examine an international school taking the topic of transition programs through the framework and determine what types of conversations continued, how often they occurred, and how they influenced changes in practices and programs.

Educational leaders collect data and conduct informal research all the time. However, often the information collected comes in easily quantifiable units, such as test scores, Likert scale surveys, and grades. Meanwhile, experiences and stories that are critical to understanding the context are harder to quantify. Instead, educational leaders are encouraged to utilize coding of stories and other artifacts in order to more fully understand the lived experiences and perspectives of their constituents.

Finally, while there are large bodies of research on the topics of student voice, parent engagement, and teacher leadership, there is less research on the impact of bringing these three groups together with the traditional decision-makers in order to improve the policies and practices of schools. We need continued and more systematic study of the ways in which bringing these constituents together improves school functioning and student outcomes. For example, a study could survey students, parents, and teachers at many different schools to determine times or areas in which they feel their voices are heard and not heard. Researchers could then examine the policies and practices in place, either within schools where constituents generally feel heard or with relation to specific times or areas when they feel heard compared to when they do not feel their voices are heard.

ECU EdD Framework

As described earlier, this PAR project is based on the CLE axioms that also undergird the framework for this program. My findings support the notion that those closest to problems are best-equipped to solve them as well as that crossing boundaries to have authentic conversations is how learning and change happen. The fact that the CPR group and I were also practitioners and other constituents within the school allowed us to be participant-researchers with close proximity to the problems as well as the assets and the action space in order to effect change.

Another important part of the ECU EdD framework is the asset-based approach, which was also integral to this project. This consistent focus on assets rather than problems influenced our CPR meetings and the CLEs. I would argue that utilizing assets could be an addition to the improvement science framework (Bryk et al., 2015; Mintrop, 2016). The final tenet of that framework is that improvements can be accelerated through the use of networked improvement communities (NIC), but I would add that an additional accelerant is not just the people involved, but also utilizing the processes that already produce positive outcomes. Wherever connections can be found, researchers and practitioners should use them. For example, I explained more fully in Chapter 6 that a positive part of this project was the ease with which the CLE axioms and pedagogies could be connected to aspects of the wellness program already in place in the middle school. Therefore, rather than CLEs feeling like a new or foreign idea, they were more easily accessible to constituents because similar elements already existed in other areas of the school.

Summary

In summary, there are several implications for practice, policy, research, and leadership development as a result of this PAR study. Overall, readers should think about ways to incorporate more voices into their decision-making processes. However, in order to be effective, they must ensure that these efforts are creating authentic conversations by honoring the wisdom of participants, understanding the power of place, and establishing trust. In the next section, I further expand on the specific implications within my own leadership practices.

Leadership Development

The final research sub-question in this project centered on how engagement in this work would transform my own leadership practices. Throughout this PAR project, I reflected on my leadership activities, examined various theories of leadership, and acted as a leader to my Co-

Practitioner Researcher team. As a result of this project and the doctoral program itself, I began to view myself as *leading from the middle*. While not in a titled leadership role, I came to see myself as having influence over the practices of others and being able to act as a conduit between teachers, students, parents, and administrators. I looked for and acted upon opportunities to include diverse voices in decision-making processes, and I advocated for my own inclusion in discussions where I may not have been so bold in the past.

First and foremost, this work to include and empower the voices of others further strengthened my philosophical alignment with the CLE axiom that "the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local questions and problems" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 4). As the data mounted to support the conclusion that conversations between and among constituents lead to change in practices and philosophies, I continued to advocate for the inclusion of more voices in decision-making processes. This occurred in adjustments to our wellness practices, increased calls for student and parent feedback, and empowering students to act on issues relevant to them. For example, during PAR Cycle Three, a colleague and I began co-leading a student wellness action team (SWAT) using CLE pedagogies with the goal of empowering them to help improve student-student and student-teacher relationships. The students' ideas were much better than our adult ideas, and I predict that they will continue to find solutions to the problems we collectively see.

Similarly, I began to feel both empowered to and tasked with trying to act as an "equity warrior" (Leverett, 2002) by advocating for equitable outcomes and representation. I began this project contemplating where equity was absent in an international school, and I continued to look for ways to better serve the needs of this diverse population. One way that I did this was by connecting and dialoguing with other like-minded individuals through the culturally-sustaining

pedagogy discussions that began during PAR Cycle Two. The group continues to meet and discuss ways in which we can influence practices within the school to be more equitable.

Another byproduct of the work to empower others and a deeper look at the ways in which I am already leading was that I felt increasingly empowered to advocate for my own inclusion in decision-making processes where I felt my perspective was absent. For example, each cycle I volunteered for, and in some instances, fought to be on various committees which impact the school-wide community. This included the school-wide wellness committee, curriculum alignment committees, and the WASC accreditation committee.

Advocating for my inclusion in decision-making and initiating many different conversations also led to others seeing me differently and asking for my opinions where they might not have before. As a woman who is also quite a bit younger than many of my colleagues and all of the administrators, it was no small accomplishment that on several occasions, colleagues and administrators sought me out to "run something by" me before presenting it to each other. With increasing frequency throughout the project, this happened with the math department chair who asked for guidance before talking to the principal and his department. Similarly, the principal talked through faculty and parent meeting agendas with me prior to those meetings.

I realized that as a middle leader who has established herself as an approachable colleague who listens to the voices of others but who also has regular meetings with teaching teams, middle school leadership, and the deputy head of school, I am in the distinct position of knowing and influencing what is happening day to day with teachers and students, but also being able to share the "pulse of the school" with my superiors. My positionality coupled with my reputation for being approachable means that I hear and understand the stories of individuals, but

I also see the big picture. Therefore, as I further explored my role as a middle leader and conduit between constituents and higher levels of leadership, I began to act on opportunities to coach and work with faculty members a bit differently than I previously did. For example, during PAR Cycle Two, I worked with a teacher struggling to meet the expectations of administrators and his department chair. Seeing me as what Little (2006) termed a "critical friend," the teacher asked me to observe his classes and provide feedback, which I did. Reflecting on Knowles' theory of andragogy (Drago-Severson, 2009), I also began to think about the varying knowledge and experiences teachers bring to their work, and I began to approach my work with teachers differently. I tried to meet them where they were, connecting my requests to existing knowledge, just as I would expect them to do with students.

Similarly, as I neared the end of PAR Cycle Three, I began to more closely connect the work of teachers to my findings that conversations between and among constituents lead to, among other things, alliance and potential practice and philosophy changes. It became increasingly clear that time for ongoing inquiry and dialogue are necessary in order for teachers to learn from each other and improve the work they do together, and I began to advocate for carving out this time whenever I can.

Finally, my role as a middle leader provides the vantage point of seeing the leadership practices of others up close. During each cycle, I watched administrators in the school handle dilemmas and initiate change, asking myself how I might act in those situations. My memos chronicle these musings, and my leadership preferences often mirror CLE axioms. For example, I most often referenced collaborative leadership, preferring to include the perspectives of others in conversations throughout the decision-making process. I also referenced a preference for a

strengths-based approach that utilizes assets of constituents and connects their dreams to those of the school as a whole.

Throughout the PAR project, I advocated for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes. In addition, I examined and expanded my role as a middle leader acting as a connector helping students, teachers, parents, and administrators understand and talk with each other. Finally, I took advantage of this middle leadership role that allows me to observe other leaders and act on opportunities to lead. Leading from the middle became a natural and potent position for me and this important work.

Conclusion

The purpose of this PAR project was to better serve a culturally diverse population by increasing equity of voice in the decision-making process. I conclude by revisiting what drove this PAR project: my research questions.

Revisiting the Research Questions

Turning back to my research questions, it is clear that the findings of this project connect closely to each sub-question. This section's headings relate to each of those research sub-questions: (a) To what extent do the CLEs support the increase of equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants? (b) How do conversations among students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the context of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling? (c) To what extent does this work transfer into the roles and practices of administrators, students, parents, and teachers? (d) How does engagement in this work transform my own leadership practices?

(a) Increasing equitable voice. Throughout all three cycles of Participatory Action Research (PAR), but particularly PAR Cycle Three, the evidence supports the conclusion that

conversations within and as a result of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) increase equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants. Over and over, participants expressed feelings of inclusion and honor while also noting the importance of understanding the perspectives of others. More voices were heard during this process, and as noted in PAR Cycle Three, they continued to talk to each other. In addition, months after the PAR Cycle Two CLE ended, constituents continued to say that this process was valuable and that they were honored to participate. As a result, they felt empowered to continue to speak up and share their own voices while also seeking conversations with others. The impact of this ongoing sense of empowerment will likely only compound. Thus, the data collected and subsequent analyses created enough warrants to make the claim that: *conversations within and as a result of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) increase equitable voice and honor the wisdom of participants.*

(b) Deepening and shifting conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling. Through the CLE process, members of all constituent groups explored homework together from a variety of angles. This process changed our understanding of what the community needed and wanted in relation to homework. However, homework does not exist in isolation, and these conversations led to more questions and conversations about its connection to other areas of teaching and learning in general. In addition, we established that conversations are an important and necessary part of building community and doing the right thing for our school. Therefore, the collective data and analyses warranted the claim that: *conversations within and as a result of CLEs deepen and shift conceptions of teaching, learning, and schooling.*

(c)Transfer into the practices of constituents. The PAR Cycles One and Two data supported the idea that constituents experienced shifts in thinking about their practices. These shifts in thinking solidified into concrete changes during PAR Cycle Three. The data supported

the conclusion that school policies have changed as a result of the CLEs and subsequent conversations, and these changes were viewed positively by almost all involved. In addition, practices and philosophies of members of all constituent groups changed as a result of learning from others during and after the CLE. These changes in practices and philosophies extended beyond homework to include new ways of interacting with others as well as new ideas about themselves, others, and the school reform process. In addition to the changes to homework practices, of particular importance were the changes to practices regarding equity of voice as constituents began to call for more voices more often and speak up to be included more often as well. Taken together, the collected data and subsequent analyses provide sufficient warrants to make the claim that: *participation in this work transfers into the roles and practices of administrators, parents, teachers, and students, both in relation to the CLE topic and the axioms that guide the process.*

(d) Transforming my leadership. Described more fully in an earlier section, during each PAR Cycle, I increasingly saw myself as a leader, whether it was a middle-level leader or simply an influencer within the school. Similarly, others thought of me as a leader more often as well, seeking me out to coach or provide feedback on an idea before taking it to administration. Throughout this process, I grew more collaborative, particularly with my adult colleagues whose needs and points of view I paid more attention to than I previously did. In addition, I increasingly looked for ways to include student and parent voices in decision-making processes more often, and I felt empowered to put my hand up to be included in committees and conversations that I previously would not have been invited to join. Therefore, the data and analyses warrant the claim that: *participation in this work transformed my work as a middle leader.*

Summary

All in all, this PAR project utilized the wisdom of participants working together in collaborative inquiry on a topic ripe for change. This inquiry, based in data collected through empirical study, led to a set of bold claims that now need to be lived through a new normative set of practices and policies. We found that authentic conversations built on trust, honoring the context and wisdom of participants, and focused on content led to new understandings of what works for this community and improved policies, practices, and philosophies. Specifically, through Community Learning Exchanges planned and implemented by a diverse team of Co-Practitioner Researchers, we learned from each other and shifted our thinking about the topic of homework as well as each other, the school, and ourselves. By empowering more voices, by creating the conditions for authentic conversations, and by leading from the middle, we fundamentally changed the way that we make decisions within the school, and all signs point to successfully achieving the ultimate goal, that these changes better serve our culturally diverse population.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Continuing Review Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Lori Richardson Garcia
CC: Matthew Militello
Date: 7/5/2018
Re: CR00007026
UMCIRB 17-001469
Leading Together

The continuing review of your expedited study was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 7/3/2018 to 7/2/2019. This research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Document	Description
Child Assent Form(0.01)	Consent Forms
Garcia AdultConsentForm (6).docx(0.03)	Consent Forms
Interview Protocol.docx(0.04)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Parental Consent for Child Form.docx(0.03)	Consent Forms
Richardson Garcia_Dissertation Proposal.pdf(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: SITE APPROVAL LETTER

TAIPEI AMERICAN SCHOOL

台北美國學校

May 19, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

Taipei American School recognizes the benefits of participating in relevant, well-designed research studies proposed by qualified individuals. Approval for conducting such studies is based primarily on the extent to which substantial benefits can be shown for Taipei American School and its mission of educating students. The purpose of this letter is to notify you of the **approval** to use conduct your dissertation study titled, "Speaking with: Implementing Community Learning Exchanges that engage all voices in a culturally-rich international middle school" with participants in our schools. We also give permission to utilize spaces at Taipei American School to collect data and conduct interviews for his dissertation project.

The project meets all of our school/district guidelines, procedures, and safeguards for conducting research on our campus. Moreover, there is ample space for Lori Richardson Garcia to conduct her study and her project will not interfere with any functions of Taipei American School. Finally, the following conditions must be met, as agreed upon by the researchers and Taipei American School:

- Participant data only includes information captured from the state data collection strategies.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Participants can choose to leave the study without penalty at any time.
- Any issues with participation in the study are reported to the school administration in a timely manner.
- An executive summary of your findings is shared with the school administration once the study is complete.

In addition to these conditions, the study must follow all of the East Carolina University IRB guidelines.

We are excited to support this important work.

Respectfully,

Catriona Moran

Dr. Catriona Moran
Deputy Head of School

Taipei American School is an innovative 21st century learning community. Our mission is to inspire each student to be a confident, creative, caring and moral individual prepared to adapt and succeed anywhere in a rapidly changing world. We provide an American-based education with a global perspective that results in a love of learning, academic excellence, a balanced life, and service to others.

APPENDIX C: PRE-CYCLE PILOT CLE AGENDA

Community Learning Exchange
February 8, 2017

Facilitators
Lori Richardson Garcia
Matt Militello, East Carolina University
Lynda Tredway, East Carolina University

I felt sad because every day I had to wake up early to practice before going to school. After school I had to go back to tennis again, and then after tennis I had homework. I didn't have time to play. Li Na, Student

Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence. Abigail Adams, parent

Anticipated Outcomes	Agreements
Analyze information about expectations and experiences of homework Activate diverse perspectives of homework Articulate themes across and within affinity groups	Names will not be attached to comments Everyone will have the chance and space to share

Participants

Admin/Counselors	Teachers	Parents	Students
5	5	5	5

Today's Plan

Time	Activity
5	Introduction
20	Opening Circle: name one person or experience that had a powerful impact on your own education until now
25	Homework Four Square
20	Report Out • What did we learn? • What do we want to do next?
10	Closing Circle: What did you learn today that you didn't know before today?

Homework 4-Square

What does homework look like for you now?	How is homework here similar or different than other homework experiences you've had?
What is your experience with other learning that happens outside of school?	What do you wish was different about homework?

APPENDIX D: ADULT CONSENT FORM

East Carolina University

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in Research That Has No More Than Minimal Risk

Title of Research Study: Leading together: Community Learning Exchanges to engage all voices in an international middle school

Principal Investigator: Lori Richardson Garcia under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello
Dr. Militello: Institution, Department or Division: College of Education
Address: 220 Ragsdale, ECU, Greenville, NC 27858
Telephone #: (919) 518.4008

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this study is to explore the implications of collaborating with an eclectic and diverse group of constituents (teachers, parents, students and administrators) in the school improvement process at an international middle school in Taiwan. This study utilizes Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) as the methodology for collaboration among this diverse set of constituents. The CLEs are information exchanges centered on a topic that directly affects all constituents.

You are being invited to participate because you are either (a) an administrator at the participating middle school, (b) a teacher at the participating middle school, or (c) a parent of a student at the participating middle school.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?

You can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted at your school. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately two hours.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to participate in one or more interviews and focus groups. Interviews and focus groups will be audio/video recorded. If you want to participate in an interview but do not want to be audio recorded, the interviewer will turn off the audio recorder. If you want to participate in a focus group but do not want to be video recorded, you will be able to sit out of field of view of the video camera and still be audio recorded. Interview and focus group questions will focus on your reflections and experiences in Community Learning Exchanges.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We do not know if you

will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?
We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me to take part in this research?
It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?
ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?
The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Consent forms and data from interviews will be maintained in a secure, locked location and will be stored for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

What if I decide I do not want to continue in this research?
You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?
The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at richardsongarcial@tas.tw

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2941 (days, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the ORIC at 252-744-1971.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?
The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Participant's Name (PRINT) **Signature** **Date**

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT) **Signature** **Date**

APPENDIX E: CHILD CONSENT FORM

East Carolina University

Parental/Legal Guardian Permission to Allow Your Child to Take Part in Research

Information to consider before allowing your child to take part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: **Leading together: Community Learning Exchanges to engage all voices in an international middle school**

Principal Investigator: Lori Richardson Garcia under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello
Dr. Militello: Institution, Department or Division: College of Education
Address: 220 Ragsdale, ECU, Greenville, NC 27858
Telephone #: (919) 518.4008

Participant Full Name: _____Date of Birth: _____

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why is my child being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this study is to explore the implications of collaborating with an eclectic and diverse group of constituents (teachers, parents, students and administrators) in the school improvement process at an international middle school in Taiwan. This study utilizes Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) as the methodology for collaboration among this diverse set of constituents. The CLEs are information exchanges centered on a topic that directly affects all constituents.

Your child is being invited to participate because he or she is a middle school student at the participating middle school. The decision for your child to take part in this research will also depend on whether your child wants to participate. By doing this research, we hope to provide new opportunities for students and parents to share their opinions on issues related to their school experiences. If you and your child agree for him/her to volunteer for this research, your child will be one of about 10 students to do so.

Are there reasons my child should not take part in this research?

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study.

What other choices do I have if my child does not take part in this research?

Your child can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted at your child's school after school or during a free period. Students will also be asked interview questions in a one on one setting in the counseling office. These interviews will take approximately 30 minutes.

What will my child be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, your child may be asked to participate in one or more interviews and focus groups. Interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded, and students will be assigned an ID number in order to maintain confidentiality. If you want your child to participate in an interview but do not want to be audio recorded, the interviewer will turn off the audio recorder. Interview and focus group questions will focus on your reflections and experiences in Community Learning Exchanges.

Data collected in hard copy form will be stored in locked filing cabinets. All data will be accessible to the research team exclusively.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?
We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We do not know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will my child be paid for taking part in this research?
We will not be able to pay you or your child for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me anything for my child to take part in this research?
It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?
ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that your child took part in this research and may see information about your child that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your child's private information to do this research:

- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your child's welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify your child.

How will you keep the information you collect about my child secure? How long will you keep it?
The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Information gathered from the interview will be maintained in a secure, locked location and will be destroyed upon successful completion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

What if my child decides he/she doesn't want to continue in this research?

Your child can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if he/she stops and he/she will not be criticized. Your child will not lose any benefits that he/she would normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at phone number 2876-9900 x234 (days, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm) or email richardsongarcial@tas.tw.

If you have questions about your child's rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the ORIC, at 252-744-1971.

I have decided my child can take part in this research. What should I do now?
The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that my child can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, my child is not giving up any of his/her rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

_____ _____

Parent's Name (PRINT) **Signature** **Date**

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

_____

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT) **Signature** **Date**

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Leading together: Community Learning Exchanges to engage all voices in an international middle school
Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this focus group interview and will limit the time to one hour.

My name is Lori Richardson Garcia. I will serve as the moderator for the interview. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. The interview is part of a study to assess the extent to which Community Learning Exchanges increase equity of voice within this school and, as a result, allow us to better serve this diverse community.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- The interview will be digitally recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the focus group data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format. Several questions will be asked about both the individual knowledge and skills gained and the organization practices used. It is our hope that everyone will contribute to the conversation.
- The interview will last approximately thirty minutes.

Interview Questions

TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:
"This is Lori Richardson Garcia, interviewing (*Participant Code)* on *(Date)* for the Leading Together Study.

Interview:

To begin the conversation, please introduce yourself and describe your role at the school and your initial reactions to participating in the Community Learning Exchange.

Question #1 – What made you agree to be a part of this process?

Question #2 – How did you feel about participating in the CLE?

Question #3 – What, if anything, did you want to share but were unable to?

Question #4 - How, if at all, did your ideas or perceptions about the CLE topic, _____, change as a result of your experience in the CLE?

Question #5 – Was there anything or anyone that you think was missing from this process?

Question #6 – What did you see as valuable about this process, either for the school as a whole or in your own role in the school?

APPENDIX G: CYCLE 1 CLE PARTICIPANTS

Name	Category	Notes
(me) Counselor, gr 6	Admin/Counselor	Long term, white American
Counselor, gr 8	Admin/Counselor	Very long term, white New Zealander, faculty parent
Associate Principal	Admin/Counselor	Very long term, white New Zealander, faculty parent
Principal	Admin/Counselor	Very long term, white Australian, faculty parent
Counselor, gr 7	Admin/Counselor	Long term, white American, faculty parent
Mom, Pakistani	Parent	Long term, 2 boys - 7th and 8th
Mom, Australian	Parent	Newer, moving from HK. 3 children - 10th girl, 7th boy (in support), 3rd girl
Mom, Taiwanese Canadian	Parent	New, 2 girls - 8th and 6th, coming from Canada
Mom, American	Parent	medium stay, 2 boys - 7th and 5th, coming from America
Dad, Taiwanese American	Parent	Medium stay, 2 boys - 7th and 10th. Coming from international school in China
Mom, Taiwanese	Parent	Long term, 1 boy - 7th
Dad, American	Parent	Embassy family, 5 children - 8th girl, 6th boy, twin boy 1st, infant girl
Mom, Taiwanese American	Parent	newer, 2 girls - 10th and 7th. Coming from local school
Mom, Taiwanese	Parent	Long term, twin girls 8th
Dad, Taiwanese	Parent	Long term, 2 boys - 7th and 12th
Mom, Japanese American	Parent	Long term, 3 children who attended local school then TAS - grad, 12th, 6th
Mom, Singaporean American	Parent	Long term, 2 children - 9th girl and 7th boy
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G6	newer, EAL, from private school in Taipei,
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G6	Long term, from local private bilingual school, prior EAL
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G6	Medium stay, from local school, high level math
Girl, American	Student G6	New, embassy family, sporty
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G6	Newer, from local school, EAL
Girl, Indian	Student G6	New from local international school, high level math
Girl, Korean	Student G6	medium stay, high level math
Boy, American	Student G6	Long term, strong English student, participates in arts
Girl, American	Student G7	Newer, attended local international school then US school, high level math, sports
Boy, Japanese	Student G7	Long term, prior Japanese school, sports
Boy, Japanese/Taiwanese	Student G7	Medium stay, from local school, high level math, bicultural family
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G7	New from America, embassy family, twin
Girl, Taiwanese Canadian	Student G7	Long term, regular math
Boy, Korean	Student G7	Medium stay from local English language school, EAL, regular math
Girl, Japanese/American	Student G7	Newer, faculty child, bicultural family
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G7	Newer from local private bilingual school, robotics
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Newer from international school in HK, high level math
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Newer from international schools in Saudi Arabia and UK
Girl, Taiwanese/Korean American	Student G8	Long term, regular math
Boy, Turkish	Student G8	Long term, single parent household, dancer
Boy, Canadian	Student G8	Newer, many sports
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Long term, sporty, public speaking
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G8	New from local bilingual private school, sporty
Boy, American	Student G8	Long term, parent on board
Grade 8 history	Teacher	Long term, American, faculty parent, department chair
Mandarin	Teacher	Long term, Taiwanese, department chair
Grade 7 English/History	Teacher	Newer, American, team leader
Grade 6 English/History	Teacher	Long term, American, team leader
Grade 8 Math/Science	Teacher	Long term, Canadian, faculty parent
Grade 7 Math/science	Teacher	Newer, American, department chair
Grade 8 English	Teacher	Newer, American
Grade 7 Science	Teacher	Medium stay, Indian Singaporean, faculty parent
Spanish	Teacher	Medium stay, Mexican American, previously taught EAL
Grade 6 Science	Teacher	Medium stay, Taiwanese American
Grade 6 Math	Teacher	Long term, Taiwanese American, alumnus
Grade 7 History	Teacher	New, American, faculty parent

APPENDIX H: CYCLE 1 CLE AGENDA

Community Learning Exchange
Taipei American School
November 2, 2017

I felt sad because every day I had to wake up early to practice before going to school. After school I had to go back to tennis again, and then after tennis I had homework. I didn't have time to play. Li Na, Student

Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence. Abigail Adams, parent

Anticipated Outcomes	Agreements
Understand diverse perspectives of homework Understand strengths and weaknesses of current HW practices Analyze information about expectations and experiences of homework Articulate themes across and within affinity groups	Names will not be attached to comments Everyone will have the chance and space to share

Participants

Admin/Counselors	Teachers	Parents	Students
5	12	12	25

Today's Plan

Time	Activity
5	Introduction
30	Journey Lines: name 4-5 experiences with homework over your educational career that stand out as being significant or important
45	Homework Four Square
30	Gallery Walk & Group Discussion: What common themes do you see across responses? What are the similarities and differences? What surprises or a-ha's did you have?
10	Closing Circle

APPENDIX I: JOURNEY LINE ACTIVITY

Journey Line – name 4-5 experiences with homework that stand out as important or significant to you

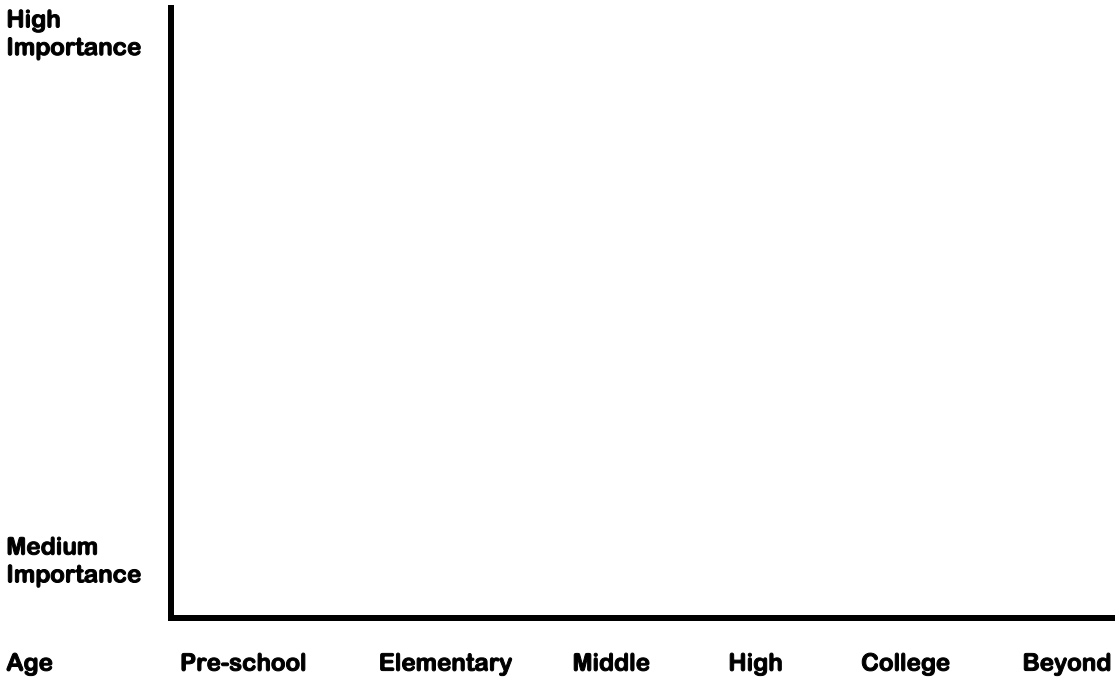

Table _____

APPENDIX J: CYCLE 2 CLE PARTICIPANTS

Name	Category	Notes	New/Returning
(me) Counselor, gr 6	Admin/Counselor	Long term, white American	Returning
Counselor, gr 8	Admin/Counselor	Very long term, white New Zealander, faculty parent	Returning
Associate Principal	Admin/Counselor	Very long term, white New Zealander, faculty parent	Returning
Principal	Admin/Counselor	Very long term, white Australian, faculty parent	Returning
Counselor, gr 7	Admin/Counselor	Long term, white American, faculty parent	Returning
IT Coordinator	Admin/Counselor	Long term, white American	New
Mom, Pakistani	Parent	Long term, 2 boys - 7th and 8th	Returning
Mom, Australian	Parent	Newer, moving from HK. 3 children - 10th girl, 7th boy (in support), 3rd girl	Returning
Mom, Taiwanese Canadian	Parent	New, 2 girls - 8th and 6th, coming from Canada	(No show)
Mom, American	Parent	medium stay, 2 boys - 7th and 5th, coming from America	Returning
Dad, Hong Kong Taiwanese	Parent	Long term, 2 children - 12th boy and 7th girl	New
Mom, Taiwanese	Parent	Long term, 1 boy - 7th	(No show)
Dad, American	Parent	New, Embassy family, 3 girls - 8th, 4th, K	New
Mom, Taiwanese American	Parent	newer, 2 girls - 10th and 7th. Coming from local school	Returning
Mom, Taiwanese	Parent	Long term, twin girls 8th	Returning
Dad, Taiwanese American	Parent	Medium stay, 2 girls ; 11th and 8th. Coming from local school, bicultural household	New
Mom, Taiwanese American	Parent	Long term, 3 children - grad, 9th, 6th	New
Mom, Singaporean American	Parent	Long term, 2 children - 9th girl and 7th boy	Returning
Boy, Chinese Canadian	Student G6	newer, EAL, from international school in Netherlands	New
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G6	Long term, from local private bilingual school, prior EAL	Returning
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G6	Medium stay, from local school, high level math	New
Girl, American	Student G6	New, embassy family, sporty	Returning
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G6	Newer, from local school, EAL	Returning
Girl, Hong Kong	Student G6	Medium stay, from HK international school	New
Girl, Korean	Student G6	medium stay, from international school in China	New
Boy, American	Student G6	Long term, strong English student, participates in arts	Returning
Girl, American	Student G7	Newer, attended local international school then US school, high level math, sports	Returning
Boy, Japanese	Student G7	Long term, prior Japanese school, sports	Returning
Boy, Japanese/Taiwanese	Student G7	Medium stay, from local school, high level math, bicultural family	Returning
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G7	New from America, embassy family, twin	Returning
Girl, Taiwanese Canadian	Student G7	Long term, regular math	Returning
Boy, Korean	Student G7	Medium stay from local English language school, EAL, regular math	Returning
Girl, Japanese/American	Student G7	Newer, faculty child, bicultural family	Returning
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G7	Newer from local private bilingual school, robotics	Returning
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Newer from international school in HK, high level math	Returning
Boy, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Newer from international schools in Saudi Arabia and UK	Returning
Girl, Taiwanese/Korean American	Student G8	Long term, regular math	Returning
Boy, Turkish	Student G8	Long term, single parent household, dancer	Returning
Boy, Canadian	Student G8	Newer, many sports	Returning
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Long term, sporty, public speaking	Returning
Girl, Taiwanese American	Student G8	Long term with time in the US, many activities, bicultural family	New
Boy, American	Student G8	Long term, parent on board	Returning
Grade 8 history	Teacher	Long term, American, faculty parent, department chair	Returning
Mandarin	Teacher	Long term, Taiwanese, department chair	Returning
Grade 7 English/History	Teacher	Newer, American, team leader	(no show)
Grade 6 English/History	Teacher	Long term, American, team leader	Returning
Grade 8 Math/Science	Teacher	Long term, Canadian, faculty parent	Returning
Grade 7 Math/science	Teacher	Newer, American, department chair	Returning
Grade 8 English	Teacher	Newer, American	Returning
Grade 7 Science	Teacher	Medium stay, Indian Singaporean, faculty parent	(No show)
Spanish	Teacher	Medium stay, Mexican American, previously taught EAL	Returning
Grade 6 Science	Teacher	Medium stay, Taiwanese American	Returning
Grade 8/9 Academic Support	Teacher	Long term, American, faculty parent, department chair	New
K-12 Music	Teacher	Very long term, American with bicultural family	New

APPENDIX K: CYCLE 2 CLE AGENDA

Community Learning Exchange
Taipei American School
March 6, 2018

"Learning never exhausts the mind." – Leonardo da Vinci

"Experience is a master teacher, even when it's not our own." — Gina Greenlee

Anticipated Outcomes	Agreements
Understand diverse perspectives of homework Understand strengths and weaknesses of current HW practices Analyze information about expectations and experiences of homework Articulate themes across and within affinity groups	Names will not be attached to comments Everyone will have the chance and space to share

Participants

Admin/Counselors	**Teachers**	**Parents**	**Students**
6	12	12	24

Today's Plan

Time	Activity
10	Introduction
30	Sharing Stories Discussion
30	Homework Four Square
30	Gallery Walk & Group Discussion: What common themes do you see across responses? What are the similarities and differences? What surprises or a-ha's did you have?
20	Closing Circle